Husbandry Spiritualized:

OR, THE

HEAVENLY USE

OF

Earthly Things.

Consisting of many pleasant OBSERVATIONS, Pertinent APPLICATIONS, and serious REFLECTIONS, and each Chapter concluded with a Divine and Suitable POEM.

Directing HUSBAND-MEN to the most excellent Improvements of their common Imployments.

Whereunto are added, by way of Appendix, several choice OCCASIONAL MEDITATIONS, upon Birds, Beasts, Trees, Flowers, Rivers, and several other Objects; fitted for the help of such as desire to walk with God in all their Solitudes and Recesses from the World.

Hos. 12. v. 10. *I have used Similitudes by the Ministry of the Prophets.*
Gen. 24. v. 63. *And* Isaac *went out to Meditate in the Fields.*

Experto crede, aliquid amplius invenires in sylvis, quam in angulis; ligna & lapides docebunt te quod a Magistris audire non possis. Bernard.

Simul & jucunda, & idonea dicere vitæ,
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo. Horace.

By JOHN FLAVELL Minister of the Gospel in D[illegible]

Flavel, J

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THE

Epiſtle Dedicatory.

To the Worſhipful *Robert Savery*, and *William Savery*, of *Slade*, Eſquires.

Honoured friends,

IT *hath been long ſince obſerved, That the World below, is a Glaſs to diſcover the World above*; Seculum eſt ſpeculum. *And although I am not of their opinion, that ſay, The Heathens may* ſpell *Chriſt out of the Sun, Moon and Stars*; *yet this I know, That the irrational and inanimate, as well as rational creatures have a language*; *and though not by* Articulate *ſpeech, yet in a* Metaphorical *ſenſe, they preach unto man the wiſdom, power, and goodneſs of God*, Rom. 1. 20. *There is* (*ſaith the* Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 19. 3.) No ſpeech,

nor Language where their voice is not heard. *Or (as* Junius *renders) there is no ſpeech, nor Words, yet without theſe their voice is underſtood; and their Line (i. e. ſaith* Deodate*) their writing in groſs and plain draughts, is gone out through all the earth.*

As man is compounded of a fleſhly and ſpiritual ſubſtance, ſo God hath endowed the creatures with a ſpiritual, as well as fleſhly uſefulneſs; they have not only a natural uſe in Alimental and Phyſical reſpects, but alſo a ſpiritual uſe, as they bear the figures and ſimilitudes of many ſublime and heavenly myſteries. Believe me (ſaith contemplative Bernard*) thou ſhalt find more in the Woods, than in a corner; Stones and Trees will teach thee what thou ſhalt not hear from learned Doctors. By a skilful and induſtrious improvement of the creatures (ſaith Mr.* Baxter *excellently) we might have a fuller taſte of Chriſt and Heaven in every bit of Bread that we eat, and in every draught of Beer that we drink, than moſt men have in the uſe of the Sacrament.*

And as the creatures teach divine and excellent things, ſo they teach them in a perſpicuous and taking manner: Duo illa nos maximè

maximè movent similitudo, & exemplum, *saith the* Orator; *These two things, similitude and example, do especially move us. Notions are more easily conveyed to the understanding, by being first cloathed in some apt similitude, and so represented to the sense. And therefore Jesus Christ the great Prophet, delighted much in teaching by Parables; and the Prophets were much in this way also,* Hos. 12. 10. I have used Similitudes by the Ministry of the Prophets. *Those that can retain little of a Sermon, yet ordinarily retain an apt Similitude.* Cicero.

I confess it is an humbling consideration, That man, who at first was led by the knowledge of God to the knowledge of the Creature, must now by the Creatures learn to know God. That the Creatures (as one saith) like Balaams *Ass, should teach their Master: But though this be the unhappiness of poor man in his collapsed state, yet it is now his wisdom to improve such Helps; and whilst others by the abuse of Creatures, are furthring their Perdition, to be by the spiritual improvement of them, promoting our own Salvation.*

It's an excellent art to discourse with Birds, Beasts and Fishes about sublime and spiritual

Subjects,

Subjects, and make them anſwer to our Queſtions; yet this may be done, Job 12. 7, 8. Ask now the beaſts, and they ſhall teach thee, and the Fowls of the Air, and they ſhall tell thee; or ſpeak to the earth, and it ſhall teach thee, and the Fiſhes of the Sea ſhall declare unto thee. *That is (ſaith neat and accurate* Caryl) *the creatures teach us when we think of them; 'They teach us, though not formally, 'yet vertually; they anſwer and reſolve the 'queſtion put to them, though not explicitely 'to the ear, yet convincingly to the Conſcience. 'So then, we ask the creatures when we dili-'gently conſider them, when we ſearch out the 'perfections and virtues that God hath put in-'to or Stampt upon them. To ſet our mind thus 'upon the creature, is to diſcourſe with the 'creature; the queſtions which man ask of 'a beaſt, are only his own Meditations. A-'gain, the creatures teach us, when we in Me-'ditation make out collections, and draw 'down a demonſtration of the Power, Wiſdom, 'and Goodneſs of God in making them, or of 'the frailty of man in needing them; Such 'Concluſions and Inferences, are the teachings 'of the creatures.*

Caryl in loc.

Common

Mr. Manton.

Common Objects (saith another) may be improved two ways; viz. *In an argumentative, and in a representative way; by reasoning from them, and by viewing the resemblance that is betwixt them and Spiritual matters.*

First, In Meditation argue thus, as in the present case and Similitude of the Apostle. If an Husbandman upon the ordinary Principles of reason can wait for the Harvest, shall not I wait for the coming of the Lord? The day of Refreshing the Corn is precious to him, and so is the coming of Christ to me. Shall he be so patient, and indure so much for a little Corn? and not I for the Kingdom of Heaven. He is willing to stay till all causes have had their operations, till he hath received the former and the latter rain, and shall not I, till the divine decrees be accomplished?

Secondly, In Meditation, make the resemblance and discourse thus within your selves: This is my Seed-time, Heaven is my Harvest; here I must labour and toil, and there rest. I see the Husbandmans life is a great toil; no excellent thing can be obtained without labour, and an obstinate patience. I see the Seed must be hidden in the furrows, rotten and corrupted, ere

ere it can bring forth with any increase. Our hopes are hidden, light is sown for the righteous; all our comforts are buried under the clods, and after all this there must be long waiting, we cannot sow and reap in a day; effects cannot follow, till all necessary causes have first wrought. Tis not in the power of Husbandmen to ripen fruits at pleasure, our times are in the hands of God, therefore 'tis good to wait; a long-suffering patience will reap the desired fruit. Thus you have some hints of this heavenly Art of improving the Creatures.

Navigation spiritualiz'd.

The Motives inducing me to this undertakement, was the Lords owning, with some success my labours of a like nature, together with the desire and inclination (stirred up in me (I hope, by the Spirit of the Lord) to devote my vacant hours to his service in this kind. I considered, that if the Pharisees in a blind zeal to a faction, could compass Sea and Land to Proselyte men to their party, though thereby they made them seven fold more the children of the Devil than before: How much more was I obliged by true love to God, and zeal to the everlasting happiness of souls, to use my utmost endeavours, both with Seamen and Husbandmen,

to

to win them to Christ, and thereby make them more than seventy-seven-fold happier than before? Not to mention other incouragements to this work, which I received from the earnest desires of some Reverend and worthy Brethren inviting thereunto; all which I hope the event will manifest to be a call from God to this work.

I confess I met with some discouragement in my first attempt, from my unacquaintedness with rural affairs; and because I was to travel in a path (to me) untrodden; but having once engaged in it, those discouragements were soon overcome; and being now brought to what you here see, I offer to your hands these first fruits of my spare hours.

I presume you will account it no disparagement, that I dedicate a book of Husbandry to Gentlemen of your quality. This is Spiritual Husbandry, *which is here taught you; and yet I must tell you, that great persons have accounted that civil imployment (which is much inferior to this) no disparagement to them.* The King himself is served by the field, *Eccles.* 5. 9. *Or as* Montanus *renders the* Hebrew *Text,* Rex agro fit servus; *The King himself is a servant to the field. And of King* Uzziah *it is written,*

(2 *Chron.* 26. 10.) That he loved Husbandry. *And* Amos 7. 1. *we read of the* Kings mowings. *Yea,* Pliny *hath observed, That Corn was never so plentiful at* Rome, *as when the same men tilled the Land that rul'd the* Commonwealth. Quasi gauderet terra laureato vomere, scilicet & aratore triumphali; *As though the earth it self rejoyced in the Laurel Plowshare, and the triumphant Plowman.*

What pleasure you will find in reading it, I know not; but to me it hath been a pleasant path, from first to last, who yet have been at far greater expence of time and pains in compiling it, than you can be in reading it. The Husbandmans work you know, is no easie work, and the Spiritualizing of it hath greater difficulties attending it; but yet the pleasure hath abundantly recompensed the pains. I have found Erasmus *his Observation experimentally true;* Qui literis addicti sumus, animi lassitudinem à studiis gravioribus contractam; ab iisdem studiis, sed amænioribus recreamus; *Those that are addicted to study, (saith he) when they have wearied their spirits with study, can recreate them again with study, by making a diversion from that which is severe*

severe and knotty, to some more facile and pleasant Subject.

But to hear that God hath used and honoured these papers to the good of any soul, will yield me the highest content and satisfaction imaginable.

May you but learn that Lesson, which is the general Scope and Design of this Book, viz. *How to walk with God from day to day, and make the several Objects you behold,* Scalæ & alæ, *Wings and ladders to mount your souls neerer to Him, who is the Center of all blessed Spirits. How much will it comfort me, and confirm my hope, that it was the Call of God indeed which put me upon these endeavours!*

O Sirs! What an excellent thing would it be for you, to make such holy improvements of all these earthly Objects which daily incur your senses, and cause them to proclaim and preach to you Divine and heavenly Mysteries, whilst others make them groan, by abusing them to sin, and subjecting them to their lusts. A man may be cast into such a condition, wherein he cannot enjoy the blessing and benefit of a pious and powerful Ministry; but you cannot (ordinarily) fall into such a condition wherein

any thing (except a bad heart) can deprive you of the benefits and comforts of thoſe excellent Sermons and Divinity Lectures, which the creatures here offer to preach and read to you.

Content not your ſelves, I beſeech you, with that nātural ſweetneſs the creatures afford; for thereof the beaſts are capable, as much, if not more than you; but uſe them to that ſpiritual ends you are here directed, and they will yield you a ſweetneſs far tranſcending thoſe natural ſweetneſs you ever reliſhed in them; and indeed, you never uſe the creatures as their Lord's, *till you come to ſee* your Lord, *in and by them. I confeſs the diſcoveries of God in the World are far more excellent, cleer and powerful*; He hath magnified his Word above all his Name. *And therein are the* unſearchable riches of Chriſt, *or rich diſcoveries of that grace that hath no footſteps in nature, as the Apoſtles expreſſion ſignifies,* Eph. 3. 8.

And if that which might be known of God by the creatures, leave men without excuſe; as it is manifeſt, Rom. 1. 20. *How inexcuſable then will thoſe be, who have received not only the teachings of the creature, but alſo the grace of the Goſpel in vain!* How ſhall we eſcape,

if

if we neglect ſo great ſalvation? *They that are careleſs in the day of grace, ſhall be ſpeechleſs in the day of judgment.*

I am ſenſible of many defects in theſe Papers (as well as in my ſelf;) they have doubtleſs a taſte of the diſtractions of the times wherein they were written; nor was I willing to keep them ſo long under hand, as the accurateneſs and exactneſs with which ſuch a ſubject ought to be handled did require. Had I deſigned my own credit, I ſhould have obſerved that counſel ——Nonumque prematur in annum, *(i. e.) To have kept it much longer under the file, before I had expoſed it to publick view; but I rather inclined to* Solomons *counſel*, Whatever thy hand finds out to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no wiſdom, nor knowledge, nor device in the grave, whither thou art going, *Eccleſ.* 9. 10.

I apprehended a neceſſity of ſome ſuch means to be uſed for the inſtruction and conviction of countrey people; who either are not capable of underſtanding truth in another Dialect, or at leaſt, are leſs affected with it. The Propoſition *in every Chapter conſiſts of an Obſervation in Husbandry; wherein if I have failed in uſing*

uſing any improper expreſſion, your candour will cover it, and impute it to my unacquaintedneſs in real affairs — In magnis voluiſſe ſat eſt.

The Reddition, *or* Application, *you will find (I hope) both pertinent and cloſe. The* Reflections *ſerious, and ſuch (as I hope) your Conſciences will faithfully improve. I have ſhut up every chapter with a* Poem, *an innocent bait to catch the Readers Soul.*

That of Herbert *is experimentally true.*

A Verſe may find him that a Sermon flies.
And turn delight into a Sacrifice.

I ſhould never have been perſwaded (eſpecially in this ſcribling Age, wherein we may complain with the Poet.

Scribimus indocti, doctiq; poëmata paſſim)

To have ſet my dull fancy upon the Rack to extort a Poem to entertain my Reader,; for I cannot ſay with Ovid, Sponte ſua carmen, *&c. but that I have been informed, that many Seamen induced by the pleaſure of a verſe, have taken much pains to learn the* Poems *in their* Compaſs *by heart: and I hope both the Children at home, and the Servants in the fields, will*

will learn to exerciſe themſelves this way alſo. O, how much better will it be ſo to do, than to ſtuff their memories with obſcene Ballads and filthy Songs, which corrupt their minds, and diſpoſe them to much wickedneſs, by irritating their natural corruption! But theſe are purer flames, you will find nothing here of ſuch a tendency.

'Tis guilt, not Poetry, to be like thoſe
Whoſe wit in verſe, is downright ſin in proſe. D. Dig.
Whoſe ſtudies are Profaneneſs, as if then
They only were good Poets, when bad men

I ſhall add no more, but to beg that God who inſtructeth the Husbandman in his civil Calling, to teach him wiſdom ſpiritually to improve it; and particularly, that you may reap a crop of ſuch ſpiritual benefit, from that ſeed which is here ſown by the hand of the Lords unprofitable ſervant, and in him,

Your very affectionate
Friend and Servant,

JOHN FLAVELL.

TO

TO THE
CHRISTIAN READER.

THere are three things wherein (as it hath been ſaid, long before my day) the exerciſe of Godlineſs doth chiefly conſiſt: Prayer, Temptation, Meditation. Meditation is the Subject of this following Manual. The Object of Meditation is twofold. Firſt, The Word: Secondly, The Works of God. The Works of God are twofold. Firſt, Internal. Secondly, External. The External works of God are twofold. Firſt, Of Creation: Secondly, of Providence. The works of Providence are likewiſe twofold. Firſt, In things Civil, the Lord ordering and over-ruling all the affairs and motions of ſingle Perſons, Families and Nations, in a ſubſerviency to his own moſt holy Ends, Deſigns and Purpoſes: Secondly, In things Natural, the Lord inſtructing the Husbandman to diſcretion, and teaching him how to Dreſs and Till the Earth, that it may give Seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater; as alſo how to breed up and manage the Beaſts of the field, both greater and leſſer Cattel, for the uſe and ſervice of Man.

Meditation upon this lower part of the Works

of God, and his wonderful Providences about them, may raiſe our ſouls very high; and while we wiſely conſider theſe natural things, we may grow more and more wiſe, in and for Spirituals and Eternals.

The worthy and ingenious Author of the enſuing Diſcourſe, hath ſupplied us with an excellent help, for the Spiritualizing of the providential Works of God in natural things, by Godly Meditations; we chiefly want the help of the holy Spirit (without which all other helps and helpers are altogether inſufficient) to frame and wind up our hearts, for this, both profitable and delightful duty; yet the help which the Lord is pleaſed to give us for our direction in it, by the Miniſtry of man, is not only, not to be refuſed, but thankfully received and improved; and all little enough to bring our hearts to, or keep them at this work: The beſt of Saints (on this ſide heaven) have (though they are not earthly minded) much earth in their minds, which like a heavy clog at their heels, or a weight at their hearts, preſſeth them down when they would make an Eſſay to mount upward in Meditation. We find it no eaſie matter to keep off earthly thoughts, when we are moſt ſeriouſly engaged in heavenly work; how hard is it then to get in, and be fixed upon heavenly thoughts while we are engaged about earthly work; yea, are (for ſo is the Husbandman) working the very earth, and raking in the bowels of it. 'Tis a great part of our holineſs to be ſpiritually minded, while we are converſing with God through Jeſus Chriſt in ſpiritual duties; but to be ſpiritually minded, and to mind ſpiritual things, when we are converſing with the clods of the earth, and the furrows

rows of the field, when we have to do with Corn and Grass, with Trees and Plants, with Sheep and Oxen, when we behold the birds and fowls of the Air, the Worms, and all that creep upon the ground, then (I say) to be spiritually minded, and thence to have our thoughts ascending and soaring up to God, in heart-affecting and quickning contemplations, witnesseth an high degree of holiness, and of gracious attainments. To make a ladder out of earthly materials, for the raising of our selves in spirit up to heaven, is the *Art of Arts*. Holy and happy indeed are they! who (being taught of God) have learned this Art, and live in the daily practice of it. Earthly objects usually hinder us in our way, sometimes turns us quite out of our way to heaven. Many plow and sow, dig and delve the earth, till their hearts become as earthly as the earth it self: many deal about the beasts of the field, till themselves become even bruitish. Is it not then a blessed design which this Author aims and drives at, so to spiritualize all sorts, or the *whole compass* of earthly Husbandry, that all sorts of Husbandmen may become spiritual and heavenly? It seems to me a token for good, that *God* hath an intendment of some special good to the souls of such as are by profession proper *Husbandmen*, seeing he hath lately put it into the hearts of two faithful Ministers (who with all of that profession, are Husbandmen in a figure) to undertake, though in a different way, this subject, and to publish their labours in print, that they may be of use, not only for the present age, but for posterity. Mr. *Richard Steel*, and this Author.

And that the Husbandman may be pleased, as well as profited, in perusing the labours of this Au-

thor, he hath, with singular aptness and acuteness, contrived and contracted the sum or scope of every Chapter into an elegant Distich or pair of Verses, placed at the head of it, and concluded it with a choice melodious Poem suitable to, and dilating upon the whole matter of it. These the Husbandman, who can but read, may quickly learn and sing for his solace, instead of those vain Ballads and corrupting Rimes, which many of that rank are apt to buy, and solace themselves withal, without any benefit, yea, much to their hurt, making their hearts more corrupt, carnal and vain thereby.

Let me add one word more to the Reader. This Book of *Husbandry Spiritualized*, is not calculated only for the common Husbandman; persons of any calling or condition, may find the Author working out such searching Reflections and strong Convictions, from almost every part and particular of the Husbandmans work, as may prove, if faithfully improved, very useful to them; to some for their awakening, to consider the state of their souls, whether in grace or in nature; to others for their instruction, consolation and encouragement in the ways of grace, as also for their proficiency and growth in those wayes. That the blessing of the Lord, and the breathings of his good Spirit may go out with it, for all those gracious purposes, is the hearts desire and prayer of him, who is,

Christian Reader,

A sincere well-wisher to thy precious and immortal Soul,

JOSEPH CARYL.

To his Reverend and learned Friend, Mr. John Flavell, *on his Spiritual Navigation and Husbandry.*

LEtters of Mart to his dear Servants given,
By him that fists the ruffling winds of heaven:
To fight, and take as such as would not daign
T'acknowledge him the Seas great Soveraign.
He lanch'd his little *Pinace*, and began
T'attaque the vassals of *Leviathan*.
Auspicious gales swelling his winged Sails,
Searches all creeks, and every Bark he hails,
That scarce a Ship our Western Coasts afford
Which his brave *Pinace* hath not laid aboard.
And what among our Riddles some might count,
Was seen at once at *Barwick*, and the *Mount*.
Yea, in more *Ports* hath in one *lustre* been,
Than *Hawkins*, *Drake*, or *Cavendish* have seen
And Prizes of more worth brought home again,
Than all the *Plate-Fleets* of the Kings of *Spain*.
But that which makes the wonder swell the more,
Those whom he took were *Beggars* all before.
But rests he here? No, no, our friend doth know
'Tis good to have two strings unto his Bow.
Our rare *Amphibion* loves not to be pent
Within the bounds of one poor Element,
Besides the learned Author understood,
That of an idle hand there comes no good,
The Law to him no *Pulpit* doth allow,
And now he cannot *Preach*, he means to *Plow*.

Though

Though *Preaching* were a crime, yet he foreſaw
Againſt the *Plowman* there could be no Law.
Nor ſtayes he on Reſolves, but out of hand
He yoaks his Teem, plows up the ſtubborn Land:
Sows it with precious Seed, harrows again
The tougher clods: takes pleaſure in his pain.
Whilſt *Orpheus* like, (which doth his Art advance)
Rocks, Fields, and Woods, *after his pipe do dance.*

Induſtrious ſpirit, to what a rich account
With thy bleſt Lord, will all theſe labours mount?
That every nerve of thy bleſt ſoul doſt ply,
To further heavens *Spiritual Husbandry.*
This kind of Tillage which thou teacheſt us.
Was never dreamt of by *Triptolemus.*
Go Reader, turn the leaves; and me allow
To pray (whilſt at thy work) *God ſpeed the Plow.*

NICHOLAS WATTS.

In

In Authoris OPERA.

LEt *Paracelſus* and *Van-Helmonts* name,
No more ride triumph on the wings of fame.
Lo, here's a *Chymiſt* whoſe diviner skill
Doth *hallowed*, from unhallow'd things diſtill.
Spiritualized Sea affairs agen,
Makes the rude ground turn Tutor unto men.
Shews *Mariners* as by a *Compaſs* how
They may unto the *Port* of Glory row.
Teacheth the *Plowmen* from their work to know
What duties unto God and man they ow.
Rare Artiſt! who when many tongues are mute
Mak'ſt things that are inanimate, confute
The Angels ſins; by preaching unto eyes,
Truths which in other modes their ears deſpiſe.
Proſper his pious Labours, Lord! however,
Do not forget to crown the Labourer.

Sic raptim canit,

DAN. CONDY.

To

To his Reverend and invaluable Friend Mr. J. F. upon his Husbandry Spiritualized.

INgenious Sir, what do I see? what now!
Are you come from the Pulpit to the Plow?
If so, then pardon me if I profess;
The Plow deserves to be sent to the Press.
'Tis not long since you went to Sea they say,
Compos'd a * Compass which directs the way
And steers the course to heaven, O bleſt Art!
And bravely done, that you did that impart
To us, who take it kindly at your hand,
And bleſs the Lord that you are come to Land.
To be an Husbandman wherein your skill
With admiration doth your Readers fill.
One grain will yield increase, it's ten times ten,
When th'earth's manur'd by such Husbandmen.
We may expect rich harvests, and full crops,
When heavenly dew descendeth in such drops,
Of spiritual rain, to water every field
That it full heaps of grace to God may yield.
I must adore the wisdom of that God
That makes men wise, who even from a clod
Of earth can raise such heavenly Meditation
Unto a pitch of highest elevation.
Besides, I mark the goodness of the Lord
Performing unto us his faithful Word,

* Navigation Spiritualized.

That

That all shall work for good unto the Saints
Which in some measure lessens our complaints.
For though our Pulpit mercies be grown less,
We have some gracious helps yet from the Press.
And herein all the world may plainly see,
That faithful servants will not idle be.
We have some bricks, although the straw be gone.
The Church at last shall be of polisht stone.
What ever men or Devils act, or say,
Sion at last will have a glorious day.

The wretched muck-worm that from morn to night
Labours if 'twere for an heavenly weight,
And when he hath got all he can, the most
Amounts to little more than a poor crust
To feed his tired carkase, if himself
Have by his karking got a little pelf
Leave it he must to one he knows not whom,
And then must come unto eternal doom;
And here his poor neglected wretched soul
Tell him at last that he hath play'd the fool.
But here he's taught how he before he dye
May lay up treasure for eternity.
Wherein he may be rich, yea, much more
Than they that do possess whole mines of Oar.
When earth's more worth than heaven, and gold than grace
Then let the worldling run his bruitish race,
But not before, unless he do intend
To meet with soul-destruction in the end.

But I must leave him, and return again
To gratulate the Author for his pain.
And here I can't forbear to let my pen
To tell the world of all the Husbandmen
That er'e I met, he, he hath hit the vein
To recompence the Labourers hard pain,
And taught him how to get the greatest gain.
Wherein he treads a path not trod before,
By which indeed his skill appears the more.

I might *Encomiums* give him great and true,
And yet come short of what's his due.
But I must not walk in forbidden wayes
For thereby I am sure I should displease
His pious mind, who doth and freely can
Give all the praise to the great Husbandman.
Who will his graces in his servants own,
But doth expect himself to wear the Crown,
Farewell dear Sir, I take my leave, and now
Will say no more but this, *God speed the Plow.*

EDWARD JEFFERY.

The

THE EPISTLE TO THE Intelligent Countrey READER.

THOU haſt here the fruit of ſome of my ſpare hours, which were thus imployed, when by a ſad providence I was thruſt from the ſociety of many dear friends, into a ſolitary countrey dwelling. I hope none will envy me theſe innocent delights, which I make out of my lonely walks, whereby the Lord ſweetned my ſolitudes there. 'Tis like thou wilt find ſome paſſages here, that are harmleſly pleaſant; yet I aſſure thee, I know of none that the moſt Cynical Reader can cenſure as ſinfully light and vain. I muſt acknowledge to the praiſe of God, that I have found ſome of thoſe (which poſſibly ſome of my Readers will call the ſlighteſt and moſt trifling ſubjects of meditation)

to be the Ordinances for Inſtruction, Caution, *and* Conſolation *to my own ſoul: yea, ſuch a degree of comfort, I do profeſs, to have found by theſe things, as hath much endeared the country life to me, and made me much better to underſtand that ſaying of* Horace, *than when I learn'd it at ſchool,*

Noviſtine locum potiorem rure beato?
Eſt ubi plus tempeant hyemes? ubi gratior aura?
O rus, quanda te adſpiciam? quandoque licebit
Nunc veterum libris, nunc ſomno, & inertibus hortis
Ducere ſolicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ, (*i. e.*)
What life can with the Countrey life compare?
Where breath's the pureſt, and moſt healthful Air.
Where undiſturb'd, my ſtudies I purſue;
And when I ſleep, bid all my cares adieu.

And what I have found ſo beneficial to my ſelf, I cannot but think may be ſo to others. I aſſure thee Reader, I am not fond of any of theſe conceptions; and yet I think I may modeſtly enough ſay, that the emptieſt leaf in this book, may ſerve for more and better uſes than a meer diverſion, when thou canſt find leiſure to peruſe it, I know your troubles and cares are many, and though your condition of life hath many innocent comforts, and outward mercies to ſweeten it, yet I believe moſt of you have found, that ancient ſaying of Anaxion *experimentally true,*

Ἔχει τι πικρὸν τῆς γεωργίας γλυκύ.

Some bitter troubles Countrey men do meet,
Wherewith the Lord doth intermix their ſweet.

The cares of your minds, are commonly no leſs than the pains of your Bodies; *it concerns you therefore, to*

ſweeten

sweeten *what you cannot [illegible] and I know no better way for that than what is here directed to. O friends! what advantages have you for a spiritual life? Why may you not have two harvests every year? one for your souls, another for your bodies; if you could thus learn to Husband your Husbandry. Methinks spiritual Meditations do even put themselves upon you. Husbandmen of old were generally presumed to be honest and good men; what else means that saying of* Menander, Αγροῖκος εἶναι τροσποιῆ πόνερος ὤν.

Profess thy self an Husbandman,
And wicked too! believ't that can.

What you are, godly or wicked is not for me (that am a stranger to most of you) to determine; but if you are not godly, it is my desire and design to make you so; and I could not think on a more probable means to accomplish this honest design, than what I have here used. Methinks it should be a pleasure to you, when you come weary out of the fields from Plow, or any other labour, to sit down in the evening, and read that chapter which concerns that particular business, and refresh *your* Souls *even from that which hath* wearied *your* bodies. *Were your hearts but heavenly, and more time allowed for spiritual Husbandry, your inward comforts would be much more, and your outward gains not a jot less; for if the success of all your civil labours and imployments depend upon the pleasure and will of God; (as all that are not Atheists do acknowledge) then certainly, your business can succed never the worse, for your endeavours to please him, upon whose pleasure it so intirely depends. I have many times lifted up my heart to heaven, whilst these papers were under my hand*

hand, for a ſpecial bleſſing to accompany them, when they ſhould be in yours. If the Lord accompliſh my deſires by them upon your ſouls, you ſhall enjoy two heavens, one here, and another hereafter. Would not that be ſweet? The Hiſtorian *tells us, that* Altitius Serarius *was ſowing Corn in the field, when* Q. Cincinnatus *came to him bare headed, with letters from the* Senate, *ſignifying that he was choſen to the* Dictatorſhip. *I hope the Lord will ſo bleſs and ſucced theſe labours, that many of you will be called from holding the* Plow *on earth, to wear the* Crown *of glory in Heaven; which is the ſincere deſire*

Of

Your hearty well-wither

JOHN FLAVELL.

THE

Author to the Reader.

COme you whoſe liſtning ears do even itch,
To hear the way preſcrib'd of growing rich;
I'le ſhew you how to make your Tenements
Ten thouſand times more worth, and yet your rents
Not rais'd a farthing; here my Reader ſees,
A way to make his dead and barren trees
Yield precious fruit, his Sheep though ne're ſo bad
Bear golden fleeces, ſuch ne're *Jaſon* had.
In every thing your gain ſhall more than double,
And all this had with far leſs toil and trouble.
Methinks, I hear thee ſay this cannot be,
I'le ne're believe it: well, read on and ſee.
Reader, hadſt thou but ſenſes exercis'd
To judge aright; were ſpiritual things but priz'd
At their juſt value, thou wouldſt quickly ſay
'Tis ſo indeed; thou wouldſt not go thy way
Like one that's diſappointed, and ſo fling
The book aſide, *I thought 'twas ſome ſuch thing.*
Time was when Countrey Chriſtians did afford,
More hours and pains about God's holy Word;
Witneſs the man who did moſt gladly pay
For ſome few leaves his whole Cart load of Hay.
And time ſhall be when heavenly truth that warms
The heart ſhall be prefer'd before your Farms.
When Holineſs as ſacred Scripture tells,
Shall be engraven on the Horſes bells.
Lord haſten onthoſe much deſired times;
And to that purpoſe bleſs theſe Rural Rimes.

THE

PROEM.

1 COR. 3. 9.

Ye are Gods Husbandry.

HE scope and design of the following Chapters, being the spiritual improvement of Husbandry, it will be necessary by way of *Proem*, to acquaint the Reader with the Foundation and general Rules of this Art in the Scriptures, thereby to procure greater respect unto, and prevent prejudice against com-

positure[illegible]

To this end I shall entertain the Reader a little while upon what this Scripture affords us, which will give a fair introduction to the following discourse.

The Apostle's scope in the context being to check and repress the vainglory and emulation of the *Corinthians*, who instead of thankfulness for, and an humble and diligent improvement of the excellent blessings of the Ministry, turned all into vain ostentation and emulation, one preferring *Paul*, and another *Apollos*, in the mean time deprived themselves

of the choice blessings they might have received from them both.

To cure this growing mischief in the Churches, he checks their vanity, and discovers the evil of such practices; by several Arguments, amongst which this is one.

Ye are Gods Husbandry, q. d.

What are ye, but a field, or plot of ground, to be manured and cultivated for God? and what are *Paul*, *Apollo*, and *Cephas*, but so many work-men and labourers, imployed by God, the great Husbandman to plant and water you all?

If then, you shall glory in some, and despise others, you take the ready way to deprive your selves of the benefits and mercies you might receive from the joynt Ministry of them all. God hath used me to plant you, and *Apollo* to water you; you are obliged to bless him for the Ministry of both, and it will be your sin if you despise either. If the work-men be discouraged in their labours, 'tis the field that loses and suffers by it; so that the words are a similitude, serving to illustrate the Relation.

1. Which the Churches have to God.
2. Which God's Ministers have to the Churches.

1.

2.

The relation betwixt God and them, is like that of an Husbandman to his ground or tillage. The greek word signifies Gods * *Arable*, or that plot of ground which God manures by the Ministry of Pastors and Teachers.

* *Fideles vocantur dei, Γεώργιον, quia a Deo per pastores, tanquam arvum excoluntur.*

It serves to illustrate the relation that the Ministers of Christ sustain to the Churches, which is like that of the Husbands servants to him, and his fields; which excellent notion carries in it the perpetual necessity of a Gospel-Ministry. (For what fruit can be expected where there are none to till the ground?) As also the diligence, accountableness, and rewards, which these labourers are to give to, and receive from God, the great Husbandman. All runs into this.

That the life and imployment of an Husbandman, excellently shadows forth the relation betwixt God and his Church, and the relative duties betwixt its Ministers and Members.

Or more briefly thus.

The

The Church is Gods Husbandry, about which his Miniſters are imployed.

I ſhall not here obſerve my uſual Method, (intending no more but a Preface to the following Diſcourſe) but only open the particulars wherein the reſemblance conſiſts; and then draw ſome Corollaries from the whole. The firſt I ſhall diſpatch in theſe twenty particulars following.

The Husbandman purchaſes his fields, and gives a valuable conſideration for them, *Jer.* 32.9, 10. *1 Prop.*

So hath God purchaſed his Church with a full valuable price, even the precious blood of his own Son, *Acts* 20. 28. *Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchaſed, or acquired with his own blood.* O dear-bought inheritance, how much doth this beſpeak its worth? or rather the high eſteem God hath of it, to pay down blood, and ſuch blood for it; never was any inheritance bought at ſuch a rate: every particular elect perſon, and none but ſuch as are comprehended in this purchaſe, the reſt ſtill remain in the Devils right. Sin made a forfeiture of all to Juſtice, upon which Satan entred and and took poſſeſſion, and as a ſtrong man armed, keeps it in them, *Luke* 11.21. but upon payment of this ſum to Juſtice, the Elect (who only are intended in this purchaſe) paſs over into Gods right and propriety, and now are neither Satans, *Acts* 26. 18. nor their own, 1 *Cor.* 6.19. but the *Lords peculiar.* 1 *Pet* 2.6. And to ſhew how much they are his own, you have two *poſſeſſives* in one verſe, *Cant.* 8. 12. *My vineyard, which is mine is before me. Mine, which is mine.* *Reddit.*

Husbandmen divide and ſeparate their own Lands from other mens, they have their Land-marks and boundaries, by which propriety is preſerved, *Deut.* 27. 17. *Prov.* 22.28. *2 Prop.*

So are the people of God wonderfully ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed from all the people of the earth, *Pſal.* 4. 3. *The Lord hath ſet apart him that is godly for himſelf, and the Lord knoweth who are his,* 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. It is a ſpecial act of grace, to be incloſed by God out of the waſte howling wilderneſs of the world, *Deut.* 33.16. This God did *intentionally*, in the decree before the world was; which decree is executed in their ſanctification and adoption. *Reddit.*

3. *Prop.* Corn-fields are carefully fenced by the Husbandman with hedges and ditches, to preserve their fruits from beasts that would otherwise over-run and destroy them—*Non minor est virtus quam quærere parta tueri.* It is as good Husbandry to keep what we have, as to acquire more than we had.

Reddit. *My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill, and he fenced it,* Isa. 5. 1, 2. No inheritance is better defended and secured than the Lords inheritance, *Psal.* 125.2. *As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people.* So careful is he for their safety, *that he createth upon every dwelling place of mount* Sion, *and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoak by day, & the shining of a flaming fire by night; for upon all the glory shall be a defence,* Isa. 4.5. Not a particular Saint but is hedged about and inclosed in arms of power and love, *Job* 1. 10. *Thou hast made a hedge about him.* The Devil fain would, but by his own confession could not break over that hedge to touch *Job*, till Gods permission made a gap for him: Yea, he not only makes an hedge, but a wall about them, and that of fire, *Zech.* 2.5. *Sets a guard of Angels to encamp round about them that fear him, Psal.* 34.7. and will not trust them with a single guard of Angels neither, though their power be great, and love to the Saints as great; but watches over them himself also, *Isa.* 27.2,3. *Sing ye unto her, a vineyard of red wine, I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.*

4. *Prop.* Husbandmen carry out their Compost; to fertilize their arable ground, they dung it, dress it, and keep it in heart; and in these western parts are at great charges to bring lime, and salt water sand to quicken their thin and cold soyl.

Reddit. *Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it and dung it; and if it bear fruit well, if not, cut it down,* Luke 13. 8. O the rich dressing which God bestows upon his Churches! they are costly fields indeed, dressed and fertilized, not only by precious Ordinances and Providences, but also by the sweat, yea, blood of the dispensers of them. *You* Londoners (*saith Mr.* Lockier) *are trees watred choicely indeed; 'tis storied o the Palm-tree, that at its first transplanting into* Italy, *'twas watred with wine, I cannot say (saith he) that you*

Lockier in Colos. p. 552.

you have been so watred by me I dare not; but this I can humbly and truly say, that if our choicest strength and spirits may be named instead of water, wine; or if the blessings which hath gone along with these waters, at any time, hath turned them into wine, in vigour upon your souls; then hath God by me, watred your roots with wine.

The Husbandman builds his house where he makes his purchase, dwells upon his Land, and frequently visits it; he knows, that such as dwell far from their Lands, are not far from loss. 5 *Prop.*

So doth God; where ever he plants a Church, there doth he fix his habitation, intending there to dwell, *Psal.* 46. 5. *God is in the midst of her*, she shall not be moved. Thus God came to dwell upon his own Fee and Inheritance, in *Judea*, *Lev.* 26. 11, 12. *And I will set my tabernacle amongst you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.* Which promise is again renewed to his Churches of the New Testament, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. And when the Churches shall be in their greatest flourish and purity, then shall there be the fullest and most glorious manifestation of the divine presence among them, *Rev.* 21. 3. *And I heard a great voyce out of heaven, saying, behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them and be their God.* Hence the Assemblies are called the places of his feet—And there they *behold the beauty of the Lord*, *Psal.* 27. *Reddit.*

Husbandmen grudge not at the cost they are at for their tillage; but as they lay out vast sums upon it, so, they do it cheerfully. 6. *Prop.*

And now, O inhabitants of Jerusalem, *and men of* Judah, *judge I pray you betwixt me and my vineyard; what could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?* And as he bestows upon his heritage, the choicest mercies, so he doth it with the greatest chearfulness; for he saith, *Jer.* 32. 41. *I will rejoyce over them, to do them good; and I will plant them in this Land assuredly, with my whole heart and with my whole soul.* It is not the giving out of mercy (saith one) that grieveth God, but the recoyling of his mercies back again. *Reddit.*

again upon him by the creatures ingratitude.

7. *Prop.* When Husbandmen have been at coſt and pains about their Husbandry, they expect fruit from it anſwerable to their pains and expences about it: *Behold* (ſaith *James*) *the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth*, Jam. 5.2.

Reddit. *And he looked that it ſhould bring forth fruit*, Iſa. 5.2. This Heavenly Husbandman waits for the fruits of his fields alſo; never did any Husbandman long for the deſired Harveſt, more than God doth for the fruits of holineſs from his Saints; great are the expectations of God from his people: *And when the time of the fruit drew near, he ſent his ſervants to the Husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.*

8. *Prop.* Husbandmen are much delighted to ſee the ſucceſs of their labours, it comforts them over all their hard pains and many weary days, to ſee a good increaſe.

Reddit. Much more is God delighted in beholding the flouriſhing graces of his people; it pleaſes him to ſee his plants laden with fruit, and his valleys ſing with Corn, *Cant.* 6.2. *My beloved is gone down into his Garden, into his beds of ſpices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lillies.* Theſe beds of ſpices (ſay Expolitors) are the particular Churches, the companies of Believers; he goes to feed in theſe gardens, like as men go to their gardens to make merry, or to gather fruit, *Cant.* 4.16. *He eats his pleaſant fruit*, viz. His peoples holy performances, ſweeter to him than any *Ambroſia*; thus he feeds in the gardens, and he gathers lillies when he tranſlates good ſouls into his Kingdom above; *For the Lord taketh pleaſure in his Saints, and will beautifie the meek with ſalvation.*

Paſcitur Chriſtus quando ſuorum virtutes videt, lillia decerpit, quando optimum quemque ex hac vita traducit. Trap. *in loc.*

9. *Prop.* The Husbandman is exceedingly grieved when he ſees the hopes of a good crop diſappointed, and his fields prove barren or blaſted.

Reddit. So the Lord expreſſes his grief for, and anger againſt his people, when they bring forth no fruits, or wild fruits, worſe than none, *Hoſ.* 9.16. *Ephraim is ſmitten, their root is dried up.* Chriſt was exceedingly diſpleaſed with the fig-tree, and curſed it for its barrenneſs; it grieves him to the heart when his ſervants return to him with ſuch complaints as theſe, *We have laboured in vain, we have ſpent our ſtrength for nought.*

Husband-

Husbandmen imploy many labourers to work in their fields, there is need of many hands for such a multiplicity of buſineſs. 10. *Prop.*

God hath diverſity of workmen alſo in the Churches, whom he ſends forth to labour in his ſpiritual fields, *Eph.* 4. 12. *He gave ſome Apoſtles, ſome Prophets, ſome Evangeliſts, and ſome Paſtors and Teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints for the work of the Miniſtry.* *Amos* 3. 7. I have ſent [*my ſervants*] *the Prophets.* 'Tis uſual with the Apoſtles to place this title of ſervant among their honorary titles, though a prophane mouth once called it, *Probroſum artificium*, a ſordid artifice. Chriſt hath ſtampt a great deal of dignity upon his Miniſters, in retaining them for the neareſt ſervice to himſelf, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. *Let a man ſo account of us, as of the Miniſters of Chriſt*; they are workers together with God: the Husbandman works in the field among his labourers, and the great God diſdaineth not to work in and with his poor ſervants in the work of the Miniſtry. *Reddit.*

The work about which Husbandmen imploy their ſervants in the field, is toilſom and ſpending. You ſee they come home at night as weary as they can draw their legs after them. 11. *Prop.*

But Gods workmen have a much harder task than they. Hence they are ſet forth in Scripture by the laborious ox, 1 *Cor.* 9. 9. *Rev.* 4. 7. Some derive the word * Deacon from a word that ſignifies duſt, to ſhew the laboriouſneſs of their imployment, labouring till even choaked with duſt and ſweat. 'Tis ſaid of *Epaphroditus*, *Phil.* 2. 13. *That for the work of Chriſt he was ſick, and nigh unto death; not regarding his life to ſupply their lack of ſervice.* The Apoſtles expreſſion, *Col.* 1. *ult.* is very emphatical, *whereunto I alſo labour, ſtriving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.* The word ſignifies, ſuch ſpending labour as puts a man into an agony; and bleſſed is that ſervant, whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing. *Reddit.*

* Διάκονος, a κόνις.

Ἀγωνιζόμενος.

The immediate end of the Husbandmans labour, and his ſervants labour, is for the improvement of his Land, to make it more flouriſhing and fruitful. 12. *Prop.*

The

Reddit. The scope and end of the Ministry is for the Churches benefit and advantage. They must not lord it over Gods heritage, as if the Church were for them, and not they for the Church; nor serve themselves of it, but be the Churches servants for Jesus sake, 2 *Cor.* 4. 6. the power they have received being for edification, and not for destruction, 2 *Cor.* 10. 8. Christ hath given them to the Churches, their gifts, their time, their strength, and all their ministerial talents are not their own, but the Churches stock and treasure.

13. *Prop.* The workmen that labour in the fields, are accountable for their work to him that imploy'd them.

Reddit. Church-Officers are also accountable to God for all the souls committed to them. They are Stewards of the Mysteries of God, 1 *Cor.* 4.1. and Stewards are accountable. *We watch for your souls* (saith the Apostle) *as they that must give an account*, *Heb.* 13. 7. If these servants be unfaithful in their work and trust, the blood of souls shall be required at their hands, *Ezek.* 3. 17, 18. which are *fulmina, non verba* (saith *Erasmus*) thunderbolts, rather than words. The guilt of blood is the greatest guilt; and of all blood, the blood of souls.

14. *Prop.* Those that spend their time and strength all their days in manuring and plowing the fields, do maintain themselves and their families by their labours; their hands are sufficient for themselves and theirs.

Reddit. *Even so hath God ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 14. *The workman is worthy of his meat*, Mat. 10. 10. 'Tis a sad thing, if those who break the bread of life to souls, should be suffered to want bread themselves. God would not have the mouth of the ox muzled that treads out the Corn, but have liberty to eat, as well as work: Yet, if any pretender to the Ministry be like the Heifer that loves to tread out the corn, (*i. e.*) cares to do no work but such as brings in present pay; he therein sufficiently discovers his beastlike disposition. Ministers must be faithful in their Masters work, and if men do not, God will reward them. For, *He is not unrighteous to forget their work, and labour of love*, *Heb.* 6. 10.

It

It is a great trouble to Husbandmen in a buſie time to be put off from thier labours by ſtormy weather, which drives them out of the fields and makes them let all ly, till it clear up again; yet mean while they are not idle but imploy themſelves in home-work. 15. *Prop.*

Even ſo in Gods Husbandry, 'tis an unſpeakable affliction to Gods workmen to be rendred uſeleſs and unſerviceable to the Churches, by thoſe ſtorms of trouble, which drive them from their publick Miniſterial work. With what a heavy heart did *Paul* go off from his work at *Epheſus*, Acts 20. It ſpends a Miniſter to preach, but more to be ſilent. 'Tis a loud ſpeaking judgment, when God ſhall ſay to them as to *Ezekiel*, *Son of man, I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou ſhalt be dumb*, Ezek. 3.26. Such ſilencing providences, ſpeaking thundering language to gracious hearts, yet even then, the keepers of the vineyard have a private vineyard of their own to look after, they have much home-work when no out-work. *Reddit.*

There is a vaſt difference betwixt thoſe fields which have been well Husbanded, and dreſt by a skilful and diligent Husbandman; and thoſe that have been long out of Husbandry. How fragrant is the one! how dry and barren the other? When you paſs by a field well dreſſed and fenced, every thing proſperous and in exquiſite order, you may know without farther enquiry, that a good Husband lives there. 16. *Prop.*

Thus ſtands the caſe betwixt thoſe places which God hath bleſt with a faithful painful Miniſtry, and ſuch as have none, or worſe than none. For as the Husbandmans coſt and pains appears in the verdant and fragrant hew of his fields; ſo a Miniſters pains and diligence is (ordinarily) ſeen in the heavenly lives and flouriſhing graces of the people. The Churches of *Corinth* and *Theſſalonica*, where *Paul* and other holy inſtruments ſpent much of their time and pains, became famous and flouriſhing Churches, 2 *Cor.* 9.2. A ſpecial bleſſing comes along with a godly miniſter, to the place where ſpecial providence aſſigns him. Such places like *Gideons* fleece, have the dew of Heaven lying on them, whiles others round about are dry and barren. *Reddit.*

17. *Prop.* The Husbandman is not discouraged, though the seed lye long under the clods, he knows it will spring up at last, and reward him, or those that come after him, for their pains and patience in waiting for it.

Reddit. Ministers should not be presently discouraged in their work, because they see but little or no appearance of all the seed they have sown among the people. *The servant of the Lord must be patient towards all, waiting if at any time God will give them repentance*, 2 *Tim.* 24.25. And if it never spring up in his time, it may after his death; and if so, he shall not fail of his reward, *Joh.* 4.36, 37. *And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth may rejoyce together; and herein is that saying true, one soweth, and another reapeth.* Though Ministers die, yet their words live; yea, their words take hold of men when they are in the duft, *Zech.* 1.6.

18. *Prop.* Husbandmen find low ground and valleys most fertile. Hills, how loftily soever, they overtop the lower grounds, yet answer not the Husbandmans pains as the valleys do. These are best watred and secured from the scorching heat of the Sun.

Reddit. Experience shews us, that the humblest Saints are most fruitful under the Gospel. *These are they that receive with meekness the ingraffed word*, Jam. 1.21. whose influences abide in them, as the rain doth in the low valleys. Happy is that Minister whose lot falls in such a pleasant valley. *Blessed are they that sow beside all such waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass*, Isa. 32.20. Among these valleys run the pleasant springs, and purling brooks, which fertilize the neighbouring ground. Heavenly Ordinances there, leave fruitful influences.

16th *Prop.* The first Crop is usually the best; and the longer the Husbandman tills his ground the less it produces. After a few years its vigour and strength is spent.

Reddit. The first entertainment of the Gospel is commonly the best; and what good is done by the Ministry, is often done at its first entrance. New things are pretty and very taking. *John at first was to the Jews a burning and a shining light, and they*

they were willing [*for a ſeaſon*] *to rejoyce in his light,* Joh. 5. 35. *Paul* was highly valued among the *Galathians* at firſt: ſuch was their zeal, that they could have pluckt out their eyes and have given them to him; but how quickly did this full tyde ebb again? for he conplains, *Gal.* 4. 15. *Where then is the bleſſedneſs ye ſpake of.*

Laſtly, When fields grow barren and will not quit the Husbandmans coſt, nor anſwer the ſeed he ſows in them, he plucks up the hedges and layes it waſte. 20. *Prop.*

So when Churches grow formal and fruitleſs, the Lord removes his Goſpel-preſence from them; plucks up the hedge of his protection from about them, and layes them open as waſte ground, to be over-run by their enemies, *Jer.* 7. 12. *Go to* Shiloh, *and ſee what I did unto it.* What is become of thoſe once famous and flouriſhing Churches of *Aſia?* Are they not laid waſte, and trodden down by Infidels? And now go to (ſaith the great Husbandman) *I will tell you what I will do to my vineyard; I will pull up the hedge thereof, and it ſhall be laid waſte,* Iſa. 5. 5. *Reddit.*

Thus you ſee the Allegory opened in its particulars: from the whole, I ſhall preſent you with theſe five enſuing *Corrolaries.*

The firſt Corrolary.

How great then are the dignities and priviledges of the Churches of Jeſus Chriſt, whom he hath appropriated to himſelf, above all the people of the earth, to be his peculiar inheritance? The reſt of the world is a waſte Wilderneſs, all other places, how pleaſant ſoever, in reſpect of their natural amœnity and delights, are truly enough called, the dark places of the earth; diſmal, ſolitary cells, where *Ziim* and *Iim*, *Bitterns*, *Cormorants*, and every doleful creature dwells. But the Church is the Paradiſe of the earth, *a garden encloſed*, *Cant.* 4. 12. in whoſe hedges the Goſpel-birds chirp and ſing melodiouſly, *Cant.* 2. 12. Its beds are beds of ſpices, *Cant.* 6. 2. and betwixt its pleaſant banks, a Cryſtal River of living water runs, *Rev* 22. 1. the ſtreams whereof make glad the City of God;

in the midſt thereof the Lord himſelf delights to walk. O *Sion*! With what pleaſures doſt thou abound! If *Bernard* were ſo raviſhed with the delights of his *Monaſtery* becauſe of its green banks, and ſhady bowers, and herbs, and trees, and various objects to feed his eyes, and fragrant ſmells, and ſweet and various tunes of birds, together with the opportunities of devout contemplation, that he cried out admiringly, *Lord! What delights doſt thou provide, even for the poor!* How much more ſhould we be raviſhed with *Sions* glory? for *beautiful for ſcituation is mount Zion.* Of whom it may much more truly be ſaid, what a Chronicler of our own once ſaid of *England*, that it is the fortunate Iſland, the Paradiſe of Pleaſure, the Garden of God, whoſe valleys are like *Eden*, whoſe hills are as *Lebanon*, whoſe ſprings are as *Piſgah*, whoſe rivers are as *Jordan*, whoſe wall is the *Ocean*, and whoſe defence is the Lord *Jehovah*. Happy art thou, O *Iſrael* who is like unto thee? who can count the priviledges wherewith Chriſt hath inveſted his Churches? O let it never ſeem a light thing in our eyes, that we grow within his bleſſed incloſure. How ſweet a promiſe is that, *Exod.* 19. 5. *Ye ſhall be to me a peculiar treaſure above all people; for all the earth is mine.*

Speeds Chron.

The Second Corrolary.

Hence it follows, that ſpiritual barrenneſs is a great reproach and ſhame to Chriſtians. Shall Gods Husbandry which is ſo planted, watred, fenced, filled with favours and mercies, be like the barren heath in the deſert? Surely it ſhould be ſaid of every ſoul that grows here, as the *Hiſtorian* ſaith of *Spain*, that there is *nihil infructuoſum, nihil ſterile*; nothing barren or unfruitful in it. Gods vineyard is planted in a very fruitful hill, *Iſa.* 5. 1. *And ſurely they that are planted in the houſe of the Lord ſhould flouriſh in the Court of our God; they ſhould bring forth fruit, even in old age, to ſhew that God is upright*, Pſal. 92. 13, 14. *They are created in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath ordained they ſhould walk in*, Eph. 2. 10. *They are married unto Chriſt, that they might bring*

bring forth fruit to God, Rom. 7. 4. An empty branch is a dishonour to the root that bears it, a barren field to the Husbandman that owns it; God cannot endure that in his fields which he suffers in the wilderness.

The Third Corrolary.

If the Church be Gods Husbandry, then there is such a special gracious presence of the Lord in his Churches, as is not to be found in all the world beside. Where may you expect to find the Husbandman, but in his own fields? there lyes his business, and there he delights to be. And where may we expect to find God but in the Assemblies of his Saints? *He walks among the golden Candlesticks*, Rev. 2. 1. I will walk among you (saith he) and be your God, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. Upon this account the Chuch is called *Jehovah Shamah*; the Lord is there, *Ezek.* 48. *ult.* You may see the *footsteps* of God in the *creatures*; but the face of God is only to be seen in his *Ordinances*. Hence, *Psal.* 27. 4. *David longed for the Temple, that he might see the beauty of the Lord.* Now, what's the beauty but a symmetry and proportion of parts? In the works of *Creation* you see one attribute manifested in one thing, and another in another thing; but in the Sanctuary you may see beauty, even in all the attributes of God displayed here: And indeed, we find in Scripture such astonishing expressions about the visions of God in the Church, that in reading them, a man can see little difference betwixt it and heaven; for as the Church is called heaven, Mat. 25. 1. so its description is like that of heaven, Heb. 12. 22, 23. *You are come to the Heavenly* Jerusalem, *and to an innumerable company of Angels, &c.* And *Rev.* 4. 22. *They shall see his face and his name shall be written in their foreheads.* And *v.* 24. *The Saints are represented standing nearer to the throne of God than the Angels themselves.* Hence also Ordinances are called *Galleries*, in which both Saints and Angels walk, beholding the glory of him that sits upon the Throne, *Zech.* 3. 7. *If you will keep my ways, I will give you Galleries to walk in, among them that stand by.*

The

The Fourth Corrolary.

If the Church be Gods Husbandry, then thoſe that be imployed in Miniſterial work ought to be men of great judgment and experience in ſoul affairs, for theſe are the labourers whom God, the myſtical Husbandman imploys and entruſts about his ſpiritual Husbandry. Should Husbandmen imploy ignorant perſons, that neither underſtand the rules, nor proper ſeaſons of Husbandry; how much would ſuch workmen damnifie and prejudice him? he will not imploy ſuch to weed his fields, as know not wheat from tares; or to prune his trees, that think *Midſummer* as fit for that work as *December*; much leſs will God. He qualifies all that he ſends, with wiſdom for their work. *His workmen approve themſelves workmen indeed, ſuch as need not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. As *Bezaleel* was furniſhed with wiſdom before he was imployed in Tabernaclework, ſo Chriſt inſtructs his ſervants with skill and inſight, before they are imployed in Miniſterial work. He gives them a mouth and wiſdom, *Luke* 21. 15. indues them with power from on high: as Chriſt was filled abundantly with the ſpirit for his work, ſo accordingly to proportion are thoſe that are ſent by him, *Joh* 20. 21, 22. *As my Father hath ſent me, ſo ſend I you.* And as for thoſe that run before they are ſent, and underſtand not the Myſteries of the Goſpel, I ſhall ſay no more of them but this; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

The Fifth Corrolary.

To conclude, If the Church be Gods Husbandry, that is, if Husbandry have ſo many reſemblances of Gods works about the Church in it; then how inexcuſable is the ignorance of Husbandmen, in the things of God, who beſides the word of the Goſpel, have the teachings of the Creatures; and can hardly turn their hands to any part of their work, but the Spirit hints one ſpiritual uſe or other from it to their ſouls?

ſouls? How do the Scriptures abound with Parables, and lively ſimilitudes taken from Husbandry? from the field, the ſeed, the plow, the barn, from threſhing and winnowing; ſimilitudes alſo from planting, graffing, and pruning of trees; and not a few from the ordering of Cattel. So that to what buſineſs ſoever you turn your hands in any part of your calling, ſtill God meets you with one heavenly inſtruction or other. But alaſs! How few are able to improve their civil imployments to ſuch excellent ends? Theſe things are but briefly hinted in the Scriptures, and thoſe hints ſcattered up and down that they know not where to find them; and if they could, yet would it be difficult ſo to methodize them as it is neceſſary they ſhould be, in order to their due improvement by Meditation.

And therefore I judged it neceſſary to collect and prepare them for your uſe; and in this manner to preſent them to you as you find them in the following Chapters. Read, conſider and apply; and the Lord make you good Husbands for your own ſouls.

THE

THE

FIRST PART

OF

HUSBANDRY Spiritualized.

CHAP. I.

In the laborious Husbandman you see,
What all true Christians are, or ought to be

Upon the industry of the Husbandman.

OBSERVATION.

THE imployment of the Husbandman is by all acknowledged, to be very laborious; there is a multiplicity of busines incumbent on him. The end of one work, is but the beginning of another. Every season of the year brings its proper work with it: Sometimes you find him in his *Fields*, dressing, plowing, sowing, harrowing, weeding or reaping; and sometimes in his *Barn*, threshing, or winnowing; some-

times in his *Orchard*, planting, graffing, or pruning his trees, and sometimes among his *Cattle*: so that he hath no time to be idle. And as he hath a multiplicity of business, so every part of it is full of toil, and spending labour: He eats not the bread of idleness, but earns it before he eats it; and as it were, dips it in his own sweat, whereby it becomes the sweeter to him. Though sin brought in the Husbandmans sweat, *Gen.* 13. 19. yet now not to sweat would increase his sin, *Ezek.* 16. 49.

APPLICATION.

BEhold here the life of a serious Christian, shadowed forth to the life. As the life of a Husbandman, so the life of a Christian is no idle or easie life. They that take up Religion for *ostentation*, and not for an *occupation*; and those that place the business of it in notions and idle speculations, in forms, gestures, and external observances, may think, and call it so: but such as devote themselves unto it, and make Religion their business, will find it no easie work to exercise themselves to Godliness. Many there are that affect the reputation and *sweet* of it, who cannot endure the labour and *sweat* of it. If men might be indulged to divide their hearts betwixt God and the world or to cull out the cheap and easie duties of it, and neglect the more difficult and costly ones, it were an easie thing to be a Christian: but surely to have respect to all Gods commandments, to live the life, as well as speak the language of a Christian; to be holy in all manner of conversation is not so easie. This will be evident, by comparing the life of a Christian, with the life of a Husbandman, in these five particulars: Wherein it will appear that the work of a Christian is by much the hardest work of the two.

The Husbandman hath much to do, many things to look after; but the Christian more: If we respect the extensiveness of his work, he hath a large field indeed to labour in, *Psal.* 119. 6. *The commandment is exceeding broad*, of a vast extent and latitude, comprizing not only a multitude of external

ternal acts and duties, and guiding the Offices of the outward man about them, but also taking in every thought and motion of the inner man within its compass.

You find in the Word, a world of work cut out for Christians; there's hearing work, praying work, reading, meditating and self-examining work; it puts him also upon a constant watch over all the corruptions of his heart. Oh, what a world of work hath a Christian about them? For of them he may say, as the *Historian* doth of *Hannibal*, They are never quiet, whether conquering or conquered. How many weak languishing graces hath he to recover, improve and strengthen? There is a weak faith, a languishing love, dull and faint desires to be quickned and invigorated. And when all this is done, what a multitude of work do his several relations exact from him? he hath a world of business incumbent on him, as a parent, child, husband, wife, master, servant or friend; yea, not only to friends but enemies. And beside all this, how many difficult things are there to be born and suffered for Christ? and yet will not God allow his people in the neglect of any one of them: neither can he be a Christian that hath not respect to every command, and is not holy in all manner of conversation, *Psal.* 119. 6. 2 *Pet.* 3. 11. Every one of these duties, like the several spokes in a wheel come to bear in the whole round of a Christians conversation: So that he hath more work upon his hands than the Husbandman.

2. The Husbandmans work is confessed to be spending work, but not like the Christians. What *Augustus* said of the young *Roman*, is verified in the true Christian, *Quicquid vult valde vult.* Whatsoever he doth in Religion, he doth to purpose. Under the Law, God rejected the *Snail* and the *Ass*, Levit. 11. 30. *Exod.* 13. 13. And under the Gospel, he allows no sluggish lazy Professor, 1 *Tim.* 5. 11, 13. Sleepy duties are utterly unsuitable to the living God; he will have the very spirits distilled and offered up to him in every duty, *Joh.* 4. 24. he bestows upon his people the very substance and kernel of mercies, and will not accept from them the shells and shadows of duties; not the skin,

but the inwards, and the fat that covereth the inwards was required under the Law, *Exod.* 29.30. And every sacrifice under the Gospel, must be *sacrificium medullatum*, a sacrifice full of marrow; observe the manner in which their work is to be performed.

Rom. 12.11. in serving God, fervent in Spirit, or hissing hot.

2 *Pet.* 1.10. in securing salvation, diligent; or doing it throughly, and enough.

1 *Tim.* 4.7. in godliness, exercising, or stripping themselves as for a race.

Luke 13.24. in the pursuit of happiness, striving, even to an agony.

Acts 26.7. in prayer, serving God instantly; or in a stretched-out manner; yea, pouring out their hearts before him, *Psal.* 62.8. as if the body were left like a dead corps upon the knees, while the spirit is departed from it, and ascended to God. This is the manner of his work: judge then how much harder this work is, than to spend the sweat of the brow in manual labour.

3. The Husbandman finds his work as he left it, he can begin one day where he left the other; but it is not so with the Christian, a bad heart, and a busie devil, disorder and spoyl his work every day. The Christian finds not his heart in the morning as he left it at night; and even when he is about his work, how many set-backs doth he meet with? Satan stands at his right hand (his working hand) to resist him, *Zech.* 3.1. when he would do good, evil (the evil of his own heart and nature) is present with him.

4. The Husbandman hath some resting days, when he throws aside all his work, and takes his recreation; but the Christian hath no resting day, till his dying day; and then he shall rest from his labours. Religion allows no idle days, *but requires him to be always abounding in the work of the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* 15.58. When one duty is done, another calls for him; the Lord's day is a day of rest to the Husbandman; but no day in the week so laborious to the Christian. Oh 'tis a spending day to him. When he hath gathered in the crop of

one

one duty; he is not to sit down satisfied therewith, or say as that worldling did, *Luke* 12. 19. *Soul take thine ease, thou hast goods laid up for many years*, but must to plow again, and count it well if the Vintage reach to the seed-time, *Lev.* 26. 5. I mean, if the strength, influence, and comforts of one duty, hold out to another duty; and that it may be so, and there be no room left for idleness; God hath appointed ejaculatory prayer, to fill up the intervals betwixt stated and the more solemn duties. These are to keep in the fire, which kindled the morning Sacrifice, to kindle the evening sacrifice. When can the Christian sit down and say, now all my work is ended, I have nothing to do without doors, or within.

Lastly, There is a time when the labour of the Husbandman is ended; old age and weakness takes him off from all imployment; they can only look upon their labourers, but cannot do a stroke of work themselves; they can tell you what they did in their younger years, but now (say they) we must leave it to younger people; we cannot be young always: But the Christian is never super-annuated as to the work of Religion; yea, the longer he lives, the more his Master expects from him. When he is full of days, God expects he should be full of fruit, *Psal.* 9. 14. *They shall bring forth fruit in old age, They shall be fat and flourishing.*

REFLECTIONS.

HOW hard have I laboured for the bread that perisheth? prevented the dawning of the day, and laboured as in the very fire, and yet is the Christians work harder than mine? Surely then, I never yet understood the work of Christianity. Alas! my sleepy prayers and formal duties, even all that ever I performed in my life, never cost me that pains, that one hour at plow hath done. I have either wholly neglected, or at best, so lazily performed religious duties, that I may truly say, I offer to God what cost me nothing. Wo is me poor wretch! How is the judgment of *Corah* spiritually executed upon me? The earth opened her mouth and swallowed

1. The Worldlings reflection.

lowed up his body, but it hath opened its mouth and swallowed up my heart, my time, and all my affections. How far am I from the Kingdom of God!

2. The Formalists Reflexion.

And how little better is my case, who have indeed professed Religion, but never made it my business? Will an empty (though splendid) profession save me? How many brave Ships have perished in the storms, notwithstanding their fine names, the *Prosperous*, the *Success*, the *Happy-return*? A fine name could not protect them from the rocks, nor will it save me from hell. I have done by Religion as I would have done by the world; prayed as if I prayed not; and heard as if I heard not. I have given to God but the shadow of duty, and can never expect from him a real reward.

3. The reflection of a slothful Christian.

How unlike a Christian dost thou also (O my Soul) go about thy work; though upright in the main, yet how little zeal and activity dost thou express in thy duties? Awake love and zeal, seest thou not the toil and pains men take for the world? how do they prevent the dawning of the day? and labour as in the very fire till night; and all this for a trifle! should not every drop of sweat which I see trickle from their brows, fetch (as it were) a drop of blood from my heart? who am thus convinced and reproved of shameful laziness, by their indefatigable diligence. Do they pant after the dust of the earth? *Amos* 2.7. and shall not I pant after God? *Psal.* 42.1. Ah, my soul! It was not wont to be so with thee, in the dayes of my first profession. Should I have had no more communion with God in duties then, it would have broken my heart: I should have been weary of my life. Is this a time for one to stand idle who stands at the door of Eternity? What, now slack-handed, when so near to my everlasting Rest! *Rom.* 13.11. or hast thou found the work of God so unpleasant to thee, *Prov.* 3.17. or the trade of godliness so unprofitable? *Psal.* 19.11. Or knowest thou not that millions now in hell perished for want of serious diligence in Religion? *Luke* 13.34. or doth my diligence for God answer to that which Christ hath done and suffered to purchase my happiness? or to the preparations he hath made in heaven for me? or dost thou forget that thy Masters

Masters eye is always upon thee, whilst thou are lazing and loytering? Or would the damned live at this rate as I do, if their day of grace might be recalled? for shame (my soul) for shame! Rouze up thy self and fall to thy work with a diligence answerable to the weight thereof: for it is no vain work concerning thee, it is thy life.

The *Poem.*

Religion	WHEN advanc'd in power,	
Will make you	HUSBAND every hour.	Eph. 5. 15.
'Twill make	MEN strive with all their might,	
And therein	FIND a sweet delight.	Luke 13. 24.
If there were	NOUGHT besides that pay,	Psal. 119. 47.
Christ gives	TO cheer us in our way,	Psal. 19. 9.
Should we not	DO the best we can?	
For there's	NO such reward from man.	Psal. 73. 25.
Shall others	WORK, and not regard	Amos 2. 7.
Their strength	TO get a small reward?	Eccles. 6. 7.
Whilst we	TURN slugs, and loyter thus?	
Oh that	THEIR zeal might quicken us!	Psal. 4. 6.
Why are our	HANDS, and feet so slow,	Rom. 12. 11.
When we	UNTO our business go?	
How can we	THEN Christ's pay expect,	Gal. 6. 16.
And yet the	CHRISTIANS work reject?	
If this, then	ALSO that embrace	Heb. 12. 24.
Them both:	IF not, we both disgrace.	
Some if	THEY could these two divide,	Mat. 20. 21, 22.
T'would	PLEASE them well with Christ to side,	
But if they	MAY not, then it were	Mat. 19. 21.
As good	CEASE pleading, they'l not hear.	
Rouze up	FROM sloth, (my soul) betake	Galat. 6. 9.
Thee to thy	WORK, no Cavils make.	
O strive,	AND try! Saints say that even	Luke 13. 24.
The pain they	TAKE, hath much of heaven.	Psal. 19. 10.
But yet	THEIR best wine's kept till last,	John 20. 10.
Their Rest and	EASE comes all so fast.	Heb. 4. ult.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The hardeſt labourers are the thriving men.
If you'l have thriving ſouls, be active then.

OBSERVAION.

Upon the thriftineſs of the Husbandman.

INduſtry and diligence is the way to thrive and grow rich in the world. The earth muſt be manured, or its increaſe is in vain expected; *Qui fugit molam, fugit farinam*; he that refuſes the mill, refuſes the meal, (ſaith the Proverb) the diligent ſoul ſhall be made fat. *Solomon* hath two proverbs concerning thriftineſs and increaſe in the world. In *Prov.* 10.4. he ſaith, *The hand of the diligent maketh rich.* And *v.* 22. he ſaith *The bleſſing of the Lord maketh rich.* Theſe are not *contradictory*, but *confirmatory* each of other; one ſpeaks of the *principal*, the other of the *inſtrumental* cauſe. Diligence without Gods bleſſing will not do it; and that bleſſing cannot be expected without diligence; therefore Husbandmen ply their buſineſs wtih unweari'd pains, they do even lodge in the midſt of their labours, as that good Husband *Boaz* did, *Ruth* 2.3. they are *parſimonious* of their time, but *prodigal* of their ſweat and ſtrength, becauſe they find this to be the thriving way.

APPLICATION.

AS nature opens her treaſures to none but the diligent, ſo neither doth grace. He that will be *rich* muſt be a *painful* Chriſtian; and whoſoever will cloſely ply the trade of godlineſs, ſhall comfortably and quickly find, *That in keeping Gods commands there is great reward.* Pſal. 19.11. God is a *bountiful rewarder of ſuch as diligently ſeek him*, Heb. 11.6. They muſt not indeed work for wages, nor yet will God ſuffer their work to go unrewarded; yea, it ſufficiently rewards it ſelf, 1 *Tim.* 6.6. and its reward is twofold, (1) preſent, and in part; (2) future and in full, *Mark* 10.29, 30. Now in this time an hundred fold, even from ſuffering, which ſeems the moſt unprofitable part of the work, and in the world to come, like everlaſting. If you aſk what preſent advantage

Non Mercurii ſed operarii.

advantage Christians have by their diligence? I answer, as much and more than the Husbandman hath from all his toils and labours. Let us compare the particulars, and see what the Husbandman gets, that the Christian gets not also. Compare your gains, and you'l quickly see the ods.

1. You get credit and reputation by your diligence; 'tis a commendation and honour to you, to be active and stirring men: But how much more honour doth God put upon his laborious servants; 'Tis the highest honour of a creature to be active and useful for its God. Saints are called *vessels of honour*, as they are fitted for the Masters use, 2 *Tim.* 2. 21. Wherein consists the honour of *Angels* but in this; that they are ministring spirits, serviceable creatures? And all the *Apostles* gloried in the title of servants. The lowest Office in which a man can serve God, even that of a *Nethinim*, or door-keeper, which was the lowest order or rank of Officers in the House of God, *Ezek.* 44. 10, 11. is yet preferred by *David* before the service of the greatest Prince on earth, *Psal.* 48. 10. 'Tis no small honour to be active for God.

2. You have this benefit by your labour, that thereby you avoid loose and evil company, which would draw you into mischief. By diligence for God, the Christian also is secured from temptations; *God is with them while they are with him*, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. Communion with God in the way of duty is a gerat preservative against temptations. The *School-men* put the question, how the Angels and glorified Saints become impeccant? and resolve it thus, that they are secured from sin, by the beatifical Vision; and sure I am, that the Visions of God, not only in glory, but now also in duty, are marvellous defences against sin; and they that are most active for God, have the fullest and clearest visions of God, *John* 14. 21.

3. You have this benefit by your labour, that it tends much to the health of your bodies. The Christian hath this benefit by his labour, that it tends to a faithful state of soul; *The way of the Lord is strength to the upright*, Prov. 10. 29. As those that follow their daily labours in the fields, have much more health than Citizens that live idly, or Scholars that

live a ſedentary life. So the active Chriſtian enjoys more ſpiritual health, and is troubled with fewer complaints than others.

4. By diligence in your civil imployments, you preſerve your eſtates, and are kept from running behind-hand in the World. *Bayliffs* trouble not ſuch mens doors; they uſually have the ſore-foot of their neighbours. And by activity and diligence for God, ſouls are kept from backſliding, and running back in their graces and comforts. Remiſſions and intermiſſions in our duties, are the firſt ſteps and degrees by which a ſoul declines and waſtes, as to his ſpiritual eſtate.

5. Your pains and diligence in the fields, makes your beds ſweet to you at night, *Eccleſ.* 5. 12. *Reſt is ſweet to a labouring man, whether he eat little or much.* But the diligent life of a Chriſtian makes the clods of the valley, his grave ſweet unto him, 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. 2 *Kings* 20. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee,* &c. Think Chriſtian, how ſweet it will be for thee when thou comeſt to die; to ſay then as thy Redeemer did, when near his death, *Joh.* 17. 4, 5. *I have finiſhed the work thou gaveſt me to do; and now, O Father, glorifie me with thine own ſelf.*

6. The expence of your ſweat fills your purſes, you get by your diligence and labour; but what are your gains to the gains of Chriſtians? They can get in an hour, that which they will not part with for all the gold and ſilver on earth, *Prov.* 3. 14.

So that compare thoſe labourers as to all their advantages, and you ſhall ſee that there is no trade like that which the diligent Chriſtian drives.

REFLECTION.

Reflections of the ſlothful ſoul.

Bluſh then, O my ſoul, at the conſideration of thy lazineſs and ſloth, which is attended with ſo many ſpiritual wants! and can I wonder at it, when I refuſe the painful way of duty, in which the precious fruits of godlineſs are only to be found? If theſe fruits lay upon the ſurface of duty, or could be had with wiſhes, I ſhould not want them; but to dig deep

deep and take pains I cannot. My desires, like those of the slothful man, kill me, *because my hands refuse to labour*, Prov. 21. 25. If every duty were to be rewarded presently with gold, would I not have been more assiduous in them than I have been? And yet I know that a heart full of the grace and comfort of the holy Ghost, is better than a house full of gold and silver. O what a composition of stupidity and sloth am I! I have been all for the short cut to comfort, when constant experience teacheth, that the farther way about, by painful duty, is the nearest way to it. What pains do Husbandmen take? what perils do Seamen run, for a little gain? O sluggish heart! wilt thou do nothing for eternal treasures?

Secondly, if there be such great rewards attending diligence in duty, then why art thou so apt (O my soul) to cast off duty, because thou findest not present comfort in it? how quickly am I discouraged, if I presently find not what I expect in duty? whereas the Well is deep, and much pains must be taken to draw up those waters of joy, *Isa.* 12. 3. there is a golden vein in the mount of duty, but it lyes deep; and because I meet not with it as soon as I expect, my lazy heart throws by the shovel, and cries, Dig I cannot.

3. The worldlings Reflection.

Thirdly, if this be indeed the rich and thriving trade, why do I peddle about the poor low things of the world so much, neglecting the rich trade of godliness for it? O, how much of my time and strength have these things devoured? Had I imployed that time in communion with God, would it not have turned to a better account? Thinkest thou in earnest, O my soul, that God hath indowed thee with such excellent faculties, capable of the most divine and heavenly imployments, or that Jesus Christ hath shed his invaluably precious blood, or that he hath sent forth the glorious spirit of Holiness, and all this to fit men for no higher or nobler imployments than these?

Is this the end of thy wonderful creation? Doth God whirl about the heavens in endless revolutions, to beget time for this? or doth he not rather expect that the weightiest work should engross thy greatest strength, and choicest hours? O that I could once consider what a good Master

Christians serve, who will not only abundantly reward them at night; but brings them their food into the field to incourage them in their labour! What pity is it that so good a Master should be so badly served as he hath been by me! Heark, how he pleads to gain my heart.

The *POEM*, by way of Dialogue, betwixt Christ and the world.

CHRIST.

John 6. 27. 1 Cor. 7. 31. Mar. 16. 26.

O Why so free of sweat and time?
For what e're long will not be thine.
Or if it might, thou sell'st to loss,
A precious soul for lasting dross.

1 Tim. 6. 6.

Those weary hands, and toiling brains,
Might be imploy'd for better gains.
Wouldst thou but work as hard for me
As for the World, which cozens thee?

Mark 4. 19.

Thy gains should be a thousand fold:
For my revenue's more than gold.

Prov. 8. 19.

WORLD.

Soul, I have always found thee willing;
Rather by me to earn a shilling;
Than trust uncertain things which lye,
Beyound thee in Eternity.
Shall things unseen now tempt thee? tush,
A bird in hand's worth two i'th bush:
I pay thy wages down in hand,
This thou canst feel, taste, understand.
O let not such a vain pretence,
Prevail against thy very sence.

CHRIST.

CHRIST.

Thus beasts are led, thus birds are snar'd, Job 35. 11.
Thus souls for ruine are prepar'd. Eccles. 11. 9.
What? trust no farther then you see, John 20. 29.
You'l trust a thief as far as me.
Deluded wretch, will naught but sight
And sence convince thee? O how right, 2 Tim. 3. 13.
How just is God? whose direful scourge Rom. 2. 5.
Such Arguments in hell shall urge.

Mark 6. 16.

WORLD.

Christ threatens wrath to come, but I
Do threaten thee with poverty.
And why wilt thou thy self, and those
That are so dear, to want expose?
Come, see the Saints; for all their brags:
How well they thrive, they'r cloath'd with rags.

CHRIST.

If my dear Saints in rags do go,
'Tis not Religion cloaths them so; 1 Tim. 4. 8.
But by such wants the Lord prepares 1 Cor. 1. 28, 29.
Their souls, against thy killing snares, 1 Tim. 6. 9.
They all are Heirs, though under age; James 2. 5.
Expectants of their heritage. Jude 21.
Kept short for present, yet contemn
A change with those that scoff at them. Psal. 19. 10, 11.

WORLD.

It is in vain to plead, for I
With present things charm powerfully.
What e're thou offer'st, they'l despise;
I hold them prisoners by their eyes.

CHRIST.

CHRIST.

Luke 19. 27. Isa. 30. 8, 9. Jude 5. 2 Pet. 3. 7.

If they will serve no other Lord,
Then let it stand upon record.
Against their souls that they refus'd
My wages, and my grace abus'd.
Remember this when they shall see
All turn'd to ashes that's in thee.

ANOTHER.

NOne will deny, but those are blessed pains,
Which are attended with the richest gains.
Grant this, and then most clearly 'tis inferr'd.
Soul-work to all deserves to be prefer'd.
This is an unknown trade, Oh, who can count,
To what the gains of godliness amount?
For one poor shilling, Oh, what risks some run?
Some toiling as i'th fire, from Sun to Sun!
Whereas one hour spent with God brings in
Such heavenly treasures, that poor souls have been
Inrich'd for ever. Even as you see
A Princes Favourite upon the knee,
Can in an hours time more wealth obtain,
Than all your lives by labour you can gain.
Prayer gains are great, and quick returns are made,
Sure then the Christian drives the richest trade,
'Tis true, the Hypocrite that never drove
A serious trade for heaven may bankrupt prove;
But holy souls which minde, and closely ply
Their business, greatly are enrich'd thereby.
The difference 'twixt the one and 'tother best.
By such a Simile as this expresst.
As in a Summers day you often see,
The wanton Butterfly and painful Bee;

On

On fragrant flowers fix, whence one doth strive
To bear his precious burden to the Hive:
The others pains no profit with it brings,
His time is spent in painting of his wings.
When Winter comes, the Bee has full supplies,
The other creeps into an hole and dies.
Like different events: shall he betwixt
The painful Saint, and lazy Notionist.

CHAP. III.

The Ploughman sings and whistles though he sweat,
Shall Christians droop, because their work is great?

Upon the chearfulness of the Husbandman.

OBSERVATION.

THough the labours of Husbandmen are very great and toilsom, yet with what cheerfulness do they go through them? It is very delightful to hear the melody they make by whistling, as they follow the Plow; yea, the very horses have their bells, which make a pleasant noise. *Horses* (saith Mr. *Fuller*) *will do more for a whistle than a whip*; and their Bells do as it were, gingle away their weariness. I have been often delighted with this Country musick, whereby they sweeten their hard labours with an innocent pleasure, and verifie the saying of the Poet:

Ovid. *Tempus in agrorum cultu consumere dulce est.*
Although they plow from morning until night.
Time steals away with pleasure and delight.

APPLICATION.

BUt how much greater cause have the people of God to address themselves unto his work, with all chearfulness of spirit? And indeed, so far as the heart is spiritual, it delights

lights in its duties. 'Tis true, the work of a Christian is painful, and much more spending than the Husbandmans (as was opened *Chap.* 1.) but then it as much exceeds in the delights and pleasures that attend it. What is the Christians work, but *with joy to draw water out of the wells of salvation? Isa.* 12.3. You may see what a pleasant path the path of duty is, by the chearfulness of those that have walked in them, *Psal.* 119.14. *I have rejoyced in the way of thy judgment, as much as in all riches.* And by the promises that are made to such, *Psal.* 138.5. *Yea, they shall sing in the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.* And again, *You shall have a song as in the night, when an holy solemnity is kept, and gladness of heart, as when one goeth with a pipe, to come to the mountain of the Lord, to the mighty one of Israel,* Isa. 30.29.

And lastly, by the many commands, whereby joy in the ways of the Lord is made the duty of the Saints. *Rejoyce in the Lord, ye righteous, for praise is comely for the upright,* Psal. 97.12. *Rejoyce, and again, I say rejoyce,* Phil. 4.4. Where the command is doubled; yea, not only simple rejoycing, but the highest degree of that duty comes within the command, *Psal.* 132.9,16. *Shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.* And *Luke* 6.22,23. they are bid to *leap for joy,* when about the difficult'st part of their work, and that you may see there is sufficient ground for it, and that it is not like the mad mirth of sinners, be pleased to consider.

1. The nature of the work about which they are employed; it is the most excellent and heavenly employment that ever souls were acquainted with. O what a ravishing and delightsome thing it is, to walk with God! and yet by this, the whole work of a Christian is expressed, *Gen.* 17.1. Can any life compare with this for pleasure? Can they be chill that walk in the Sun-shine? or sad, that abide in the fountain of all delights? and walk with him whose name is the God of all comfort, 2 *Cor.* 1.3. *In whose presence is fulness of joy,* Psal. 16.11. O what an Angelical life doth a Christian then live!

2. Or (2ly.) If we consider the variety of spiritual imployments, *varietas delectat.* Change of employment takes off the

the tediousness of Labour. Variety of voices please the ear: variety of colours delights the eye; the same meat prepared several ways, pleases the palate more, and clogs it less. But O the variety of choice dishes wherewith God entertains his people in a Sabbath! as the Word, Prayer, Sacraments, &c. *Isa.* 58. 13. If thou call the Sabbath thy delights; or as *Tremelius* renders it, thy delicate things. *My soul* (saith *David*) *shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness*, Psal. 63. 5.

Or, lastly, if we consider the suitableness of this work, to a regenerate soul. Is it any pain for a bird to fly? or a fish to swim? Is the eye tired with beautiful objects? or the ear with melodious sounds? As little can a spiritual soul be wearied with spiritual and heavenly exercises, *Rom.* 7. 22. *I delight in the Law of God, after the inner man. Gravia non gravitant in eorum loco* (saith the *Philosopher*) weighty things are not heavy in their own element, or center. And surely, God is the center of all gracious spirits. A Saint can sit from morning to night to hear discourses of the love and loveliness of Jesus Christ. The sight of your thriving flocks and flourishing fields, cannot yield you that pleasure which an upright soul can find in one quarter of an hours communion with God. *They that are after the flesh* (saith the Apostle, *Rom.* 8. 5.) *do mind the things of the flesh, and they that are after the spirit, the things of the spirit.* But then, look how much heavenly objects transcend earthly ones, and how much the soul is more capable of delight in those objects, than the gross and duller senses are in theirs; so much doth the pleasures arising from the duty excel all sensitive delights on earth.

REFLECTIONS.

The Carnal hearts Reflection.

How am I cast and condemned by this, may I say; who never savoured this spiritual delight in holy duties. When I am about my earthly imployments; I can go unweariedly, from day to day; all the way is downhill to my nature: and the wheels of my affections being oyled with carnal delight, run so fast, that they have need most times of trigging. Here I rather need the curb than the spur. O, how fleet and nim-

ble are my spirits, in these their pursuits! But O, what a slug am I in religious duties! Sure if my heart were renewed by grace, I should delight in the law of God, *Rom.* 7. 22. All the world is alive in their ways, every creature enjoyes his proper pleasure; and is there no delight to be found in the paths of holiness? Is godliness only a dry root, that bears no pleasant fruits? No, no, there are doubtless incomparable pleasures to be found therein: but such a carnal heart as mine savours them not.

The Hypocrites Reflection.

I cannot say, but I have found delight in Religious duties but they have been only such as rather sprang from the ostentation of gifts and applauses of men, than any sweet and real communion I have had with God through them; they have rather proved food and fewel to my pride, than food to my Soul. Like the Nightingale I can sing sweetly, when I observe others to listen to me, and be affected with my musick. O, false deceitful heart, such delights as this will end in howling! were my spirit right, it would as much delight in retirements for the enjoyment of God, as it doth in those duties that are most exposed to the observation of man. Will such a spring as this maintain a stream of affections; when carnal motives fail? What wilt thou answer (O my soul) to that question, *Job* 27. 9, 10. *Will God hear his cry when trouble comes upon him? Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?* What wilt thou reply to this question? Deceive not thou thy self, O my soul! thou wilt doubtless be easily perswaded to let go that thou never delightedst in; and from an hypocrite in Religion, quickly become an Apostate from Religion.

The upright hearts Reflection.

From all this, the upright heart takes advantage to rouze up its delight in God, and thus it expostulateth with it self: Doth the Plowman sing amidst his drudging labours, and whistle away his wearines in the fields, and shall I droop amidst such heavenly imployment? O my soul, what want'st thou here, to provoke thy delight? if there be such an affection as delight in thee, methinks, such an object, as the blessed face of God in Ordinances should excite it. Ah, how would this ennoble all my services, and make them Angel-like!

like! how glad are those blessed creatures to be imployed for God? No sooner were they created, but they sang together, and shouted for joy, *Job* 38. 7. How did they fill the Air with heavenly melody, when sent to bring the joyful tydings of a Saviour to the world? Ascribing glory to God in the highest, even to the highest of their powers: yea, this delight would make all my duties Christ-like; and the nearer that pattern, the more excellent. He delighted to do his Fathers will, it was to him meat and drink, *Psal.* 40. 7. *John* 4. 32, 34.

Yea, it would not only ennoble, but facilitate all my duties, and be to me as wings to a bird flying, or sails to a Ship in motion, *Non tardat uncta rota*; oyled wheels run freely; *Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Aminadab.* O, what is the reason (my God) my delight in thee should be so little? Is it not because my unbelief is so great? Rouze up my delights, O thou fountain of pleasure! and let me swim down the stream of holy joys in duty, into the boundless Ocean of those immense delights that are in thy presence, and at thy right hand for evermore.

The *Poem.*

O What a (1) dull, despondent heart is mine?
That takes no more (2) delight in things Divine.
When all the creatures both in heaven and earth:
Enjoy their (3) pleasures, and are big with mirth.
(4) Angels and Saints that are before the Throne;
In extasies, and raptures every one.
Perpetually is he led: Each blessed spirit
The purest (5) highest joys; doth there inherit.
The Saints on earth, in their imperfect state;
Those peerless joys by (6) faith do antidate.
To natural men, who savour not this pleasure;
Yet bounteous nature doth unlock her treasure
Of (7) sensitive delights, Yea, strange to tell;
Bold sinners (8) rant it all the way to hell.

(1) Isa. 68. 7.
(2) Psal. 94. 19
(3) Ps. 145. 10.
(4) Rev. 5. 11, 12, 13.
(5) Mat. 25. 21.
(6) 1 Pet. 1. 8, 9
(7) Act. 14. 17.
(8) Job 21. 11.

Like fiſh that play in *Jordans* ſilver ſtream;
So theſe in ſenſual Luſts: and never dream
Of that dead Sea, to which the ſtream doth tend:
And to their pleaſures puts a (9) fatal end.
(9) Jam. 5.18. Yea (1) birds, and (2) beaſts as well as men, enjoy
(1) Pſ. 104.12 Their innocent delights. Theſe Chirp and play;
(2) Pſ. 104.11. The chearful birds among the branches ſing,
And make the neighbouring groves with muſick ring.
With various warbling notes they all invite,
Our raviſht ears with pleaſure and delight.
(3) Pſ. 11.4.6. The new fallen Lambs (3) will in a Sun-ſhine day,
About their feeding dams jump up and play
(4) Jer. 2.13 Are (4) Ciſterns ſweet? and is the fountain bitter?
Or can the Sun be dark, when glow-worms glitter?
(5) Iſa. 30.29 Have (5) inſtruments, their ſweet and melodious airs?
All creatures their delights, and Saints not theirs?
(6) Pſal. 4.7. Yea, theirs (6) tranſcend theſe ſenſual ones, as far;
As noon day *Phebus* doth a twinkling ſtar,
Why droop I then, may any creature have
A life like mine for pleaſure? Who ere gave
(7) Joh. 15.11. The like (7) encouragement that Chriſt hath given,
To do his will on earth as 'tis in Heaven?

CHAP. IV.

Upon the due quality of arable Land.

Corn Land muſt neither be to fat, nor poor?
The middle ſtate ſuits beſt with Chriſtians ſure?

OBSERVATION.

HUsbandmen find by experience, that their arable Lands may be dreſt to much as well as too little. If the ſoil be over rank, the ſeed ſhoots up ſo much into the ſtalk, that it ſeldom ears well; and if too thin and poor, it wants its due nutriment, and comes not to perfection. Therefore their care is to keep it in heart, but not to overdreſs or underdreſs

derdress it. The end of all their cost and pains about it is fruit; and therefore reason tells them, that such a state and temperament of it, as best fits it for fruit, is best both for it and them.

APPLICATION.

AND doth not spiritual experience teach Christians, that a mediocrity and competency of the things of this life, best fits them for the fruits of obedience, which is the end and excellency of their beings? A man may be overmercied as well as over afflicted. *Rare fumant fœlicibus aræ*, the altars of the rich seldom smoke. When our outward enjoyments are by providence shaped and fitted to our condition, as a suit is to the body, that fits close and neat, neither too curt nor long; we cannot desire a better condition in this world. This was it that wise *Agur* requested of God, *Prov.* 30.8,9. *give me neither poverty nor riches, but feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee? and say who is the Lord, or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.* Against both he prayes *equally*, not *absolutely*; that had been his sin, but comparatively and submissively to the will of God. He had rather, if God see it fit, to avoid both these extreams, but what would he have then? Why food convenient. Or, according to the *Hebrew*, give me my prey or statute bread; which is a metaphor from birds that fly up and down to prey for their young, and what they get they distribute among them; they bring them enough to preserve their lives, but not more than enough to lye mouldering in the nest. Such a proportion *Agur* desired; and the reason why he desired it, is drawn from the danger of both the extreams. He measured (like a wise Christian) the conveniency or inconveniency of his estate in the world, by its suitableness or unsuitableness to the end of his being; which is the service of God. He accounted the true excellency of his life to consist in its reference and tendency to the glory of his God; and he could not see how a *redundancy* or too great a *penury* of earthly comforts, could fit him for that, but a middle estate equally

equally removed from both extreams, beſt fitted that end. And this was all that good *Jacob*, who was led by the ſame ſpirit lookt at, *Gen.* 28.20. *And* Jacob *vowed a vow ſaying, if God will be with me, and keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and rayment to put on, ſo that I come again to my fathers houſe in peace, then ſhall the Lord be my God.* Poor *Jacob*, he deſires no great matter in the World, food and rayment will ſatisfie him; in ſpiritual things his deſires are boundleſs; he is the moſt greedy and unſatisfied man in the world, *Hoſ.* 12.4. but in the matters of this life, if he can get from God but *offam & aquam*, a morſel of meat, and a mouth full of water, he will not envy the richeſt *Cræſus* or *Craſſus* upon earth. Meat and drink are the riches of Chriſtians, *Divitiæ ſunt, adlegem naturæ compoſita paupertas* (ſaith *Pomponius Atticus*) riches are ſuch a poverty and mediocrity as hath enough for natures uſes; and ſuch a ſtate is beſt accommodated, both to the condition and to the deſires of a Saint.

Cibus & potus ſunt divitiæ Chriſtianorum.

1. To his condition, for what is a Saint but a ſtranger and Pilgrim upon earth, , a man in a ſtrange Countrey travelling homeward? So *David* profeſſed himſelf, *Pſal.* 119.19. *I am a ſtranger in this Earth.* And ſo thoſe worthies, who are now at home in heaven, *Heb.* 11. 13. they profeſſed themſelves to be ſtrangers and Pilgrims upon earth, and to ſeek a Countrey; a *viaticum* contents a traveller, he will not cumber himſelf with ſuperfluous things which would rather clog and tire, than expedite and help him in his journey.

2. It ſuits beſt with his deſires, I mean his regular and adviſed deſires. For,

1. A gracious ſoul earneſtly deſires a free condition in the world, he is ſenſible he hath much work to do, a race to run, and is loath to be clog'd or have his foot in the ſnare of the cares or pleaſures of this life. He knows that fulneſs expoſes to wantonneſs and irreligion, *Deut.* 6.12. *Hoſ.* 13.6. 'Tis hard, in the midſt of ſo many tempting objects, to keep the golden bridle of moderation upon the affections. The heart of a Chriſtian, like the Moon, commonly ſuffers an eclipſe when it is at the full, and that by the interpoſition of the earth. It

It was *Solomons* fulneſs that drew out and diſſolved his ſpirits, and brought him to ſuch a low ebb in ſpirituals, that it remains a queſtion with ſome, Whether he ever recovered it to his dying day. As it is the miſery of the poor to be neglected of men, ſo it is the miſery of the rich to neglect God. Who can be poorer than to have the world, and love it? Or richer, than to enjoy but little of it, and live above it?

And on the other ſide, extream poverty is no leſs expoſed to ſin and danger, *Lev.* 6.2,3,4. As high and lofty trees are ſubject to ſtorms and tempeſts, ſo the loweſt ſhrubs to be brows'd on by every beaſt: and therefore, a Saint deſires a juſt competency as the fitteſt, becauſe the freeſt ſtate.

2. A gracious perſon deſires no more but a competency, becauſe there is moſt of Gods love and care diſcovered in giving in our daily bread, by a daily providence. It is betwixt ſuch a condition, and a fulneſs of creature-proviſions in our hand, as it was betwixt *Egypt* and *Canaan*; *Egypt* was water'd with the foot from the River *Nilus*, and little of God was ſeen in that mercy; but *Canaan* depended upon the dews and ſhowers of Heaven; and ſo, every ſhower of rain was a refreſhing ſhower to their ſouls, as well as bodies. Moſt men that have a ſtock of creature-comfors in their hands, look upon all as coming in an ordinary natural courſe, and ſee very little of God in their mercies. *Pope Adrian* built a Colledge at *Lovain*, and cauſed this inſcription to be written, in letters of Gold on the gates therof; *Trajectum plantavit*, *Lovanium rigavit*, *Cæſar dedit incrementum.* (i.e.) *Utretcht* planted me, *Lovain* water'd me, and *Cæſar* gave the increaſe. One to reprove his folly, wrote underneath, *Hic Deus Nihil fecit*; Here God did nothing. Carnal men, they ſow, and reap, and eat, and look no farther.

But now, when a man ſees his mercies come in by the ſpecial and aſſiduous care of God for him, there is a double ſweetneſs in thoſe mercies; the natural ſweetneſs which comes from the creature it ſelf, every one, even the beaſts can taſte that as well as thee; but beſides that, there is a ſpiritual ſweetneſs, far exceeding the former, which none but a

believer

believer taſts: and much of that comes from the manner in which he receives it, becauſe it comes (be it never ſo courſe or little) as a Covenant mercy to him. *He hath given bread to them that fear him, he is ever mindful of his Covenant, Pſal.* 111.5. *Luther*, who made many a meal upon a broiled Herring, was wont to ſay, *Mendicato pane hic vivamus, an non hoc pulchre ſarcitur in eo, quod paſcimur pane cum angelis & vita æterna, Chriſto & Sacramentis*; Let us be content with courſe fare here, have we not the bread that came down from heaven? do we not feed with Angels; a pregnant inſtance of the ſweetneſs of ſuch mercies, is given us by a worthy Divine of our own, Mr. *Iſaac Ambroſs*, *For mine own part (ſaith he) however the Lord hath ſeen cauſe to give me but a poor pittance of outward things (for which I bleſs his name) yet in the income thereof, I have many times obſerved ſo much of his peculiar providence, that thereby they have been very much ſweetned, and my heart hath been raiſed to admire his grace. When of late under an hard diſpenſation (which I judge not meet to mention, wherein I ſuffered with inward peace conſcienciouſly) all ſtreams of wonted ſupplies being ſtopt, the waters of relief for my ſelf and my family did run low. I went to bed with ſome ſtaggerings and doubtings of the Fountains letting out it ſelf for our refreſhing, but ere I did awake in the morning a Letter was brought to my bed ſide, which was ſigned by a choice friend Mr.* Anthony Aſh, *which reported ſome unexpected breakings out of Gods goodneſs for my comfort. Theſe are ſome of his lines — Your God, who hath given you an heart thankfully to record your experiences of his goodneſs, doth renew experiences for your encouragement. Now I ſhall report one which will raiſe your ſpirit towards the* God *of your mercy*, &c. *whereupon he ſweetly concludes, One morſel of God's Proviſion, (eſpecially if it come unexpected, and upon Prayer, when wants are moſt) will be more ſweet to a ſpiritual reliſh, than all former full enjoyments were.*

Epiſtle to the Earl of *Bedford ante ultima.*

Many Mercies come unask'd for, and they require thankfulneſs; but when mercies come in upon prayer, and as a return

return of prayer, their sweetness more than doubles; for now it's both God's blessing upon its own institution; and a seal set to his promise at once, *Psal.* 66. 16, 17. Doubtless *Hannah* found more comfort in a *Samuel*, and *Rachel* in her *Naphthali*, (the one being ask'd of God, and the other wrestled for with God, as their names import) than mothers ordinarily do in their Children.

REFLECTIONS.

Do the people of God desire only so much of the Creature as may fit them for the service of God; what a wretch then am I that have desired only so much of Religion as may fit me to gain the creature! As Gods people have subjected all their Creature-enjoyments to Religion, so oppositely, O my soul, thou hast subjected Religion to thy worldly interest and designs. Instead of eating and drinking to serve God, I have served God that I might eat and drink; yea, I have not only acted below Religion, but below Reason also; for reason dictates plainly, that the means must never be more excellent than the end. Wretch that I am, to make Religion a slave to my lust, a stirrup to advancement, an artifice to carry on my carnal designs, verily I have my reward; and this is all the good I am ever like to get by it.

The Reflection of the designing Hypocrite.

And no less should the Worldling tremble, to consider how he hath cast off the duties of Religion, made them stand aside and give place to the world. Instead of desiring so much only as might make him serviceable to God, he thrusts aside the service of God to get as much of the world as he can, who is so far from making godliness the end of his creature-comforts, that he rather looks upon it as an obstacle and hinderance to them. May not the very heathens make me blush? could *Aristotle* deliver this as a true rule to posterity, to make Religion our first and chief care? could *Aristippus* say, he would rather neglect his means than his mind? his Farm than his soul? Will the very *Mahometans*, how urgent soever their business be, lay it all aside, five times in the day to pray? yea, is it common to a Proverb among the very *Papists*,

The Worldlings Reflection.

that Mass and meat hinders no man, and yet I that profess my self a Christian, thrust out duty for every trifle? Oh wretched soul! how hath the God of this world blinded mine eyes? can the world indeed do that for me that Christ can do? hath it ever proved true to them that trusted it and doted on it? Hath it not at last turn'd them off as men turn off a Sumpter horse at night, that hath been a drudge to carry their Gold and silver for them all day, and at last is turn'd out with an empty belly and a gall'd back? O how righteous will that sentence of God be? Go cry to the gods whom thou hast served!

The gracious souls reflexion.

And may not many gracious hearts turn in upon themselves with shame and sorrow, to consider how unsatisfied they have been in that condition that other have prefer'd and esteem'd as the greatest of all outward mercies? I have indeed been fed with food convenient, but not contented: How hath my heart been tortured from day to day with anxious thoughts, what I shall eat and drink, and wherewith I and mine should be cloathed? I pretend indeed that I care but for a competency of the world, but sure I am, my cares about it have been incompetent. Come my distrustful earthly heart let me propound a few questions to thee about this matter, and answer truly to what I shall now demand of thee.

1. Quest. Hast thou here a continuing City? art thou at home, or upon thy journey, that thou art so solicitous about the world? thy profession indeed speaks thee a stranger upon earth, but thy conversation a home-dweller. *Erasmus* said he desired honours and riches, no more than a weary horse doth a heavy Cloak-bag. Wouldst thou not account him a fool that would victual his ship as much to cross the Channel to *France*, as if she were bound for the *East Indies*? Alass! it will be but a little while, and then there will be no more need of any of these things. 'Tis sad, that a soul which stands at the door of Eternity, should be perplexing it self about food and rayment.

2. Quest. Or, 2*ly*. Which of all the Saints hast thou known to be the better for much of the world? it hath been some mens utter

utter ruine. Seldom doth God ſuffer men to be their own carvers, but they cut their own fingers. *To give riches and pleaſures to an evil man* (ſaith *Ariſtotle*) *is but to give wine to one that hath a Fever.* Where there is no *want*, there is uſually much *wantonneſs*. What a ſad ſtory was that of *Pius Quintus*, When I was in a low condition (ſaid he) I had ſome comfortable hopes of my ſalvation, but when I came to be a Cardinal, I greatly doubted of it; but ſince I came to the Popedom, I have no hope at all. Though this poor undone wretch ſpake it out, and others keep it in; yet doubtleſs he hath many thouſand fellows in the World, that might ſay as much would they but ſpeak the truth.

And even Gods own people, though the world hath not excluded them out of heaven, yet it hath ſorely clog'd them in the way thither. Many that have been very humble, holy and heavenly in a low condition, have ſuffered a ſad ebb in a full condition. What a cold blaſt have they felt coming from the cares and delights of this life, to chill both their graces and comforts! it had been well for ſome of God's people if they had never known what proſperity ment.

Is not this a ſad ſymptom of a declining ſtate of ſoul, to be ſo hot, eager and anxious about the ſuperfluous trifles of this life. Think'ſt thou, O my ſoul! that one who walks in the views of that glory above, and maintains a converſation in heaven, can be much taken with theſe vanities? do not the viſions of God vail the tempting ſplendor of the creature! It was the opinion of ſome of the *Schoolmen*, that the reaſon why *Adam in Paradiſe* was not ſenſible of his nakedneſs, was becauſe he was wholly taken up in converſing with God. But this is certain, lively and ſweet communion with God blunts and dulls the edge of the affections to earthly things; and canſt thou be ſatisfied my ſoul with ſuch gains as are attended with ſuch ſpiritual loſſes; 3. *Queſt.*

To conclude, is it not diſhonourable to God, and a juſtification of the way of the world, for me that profeſs my ſelf a Chriſtian to be as eager after riches as other men? *After all theſe things do the Nations ſeek*, Mat. 6.32. If I had no father in heaven, nor promiſe in the word, it were another 4. *Queſt.*

matter, but since my heavenly father knows what I have need of, and hath charged me to be careful in nothing, but only tell him my wants, *Phil.* 4. 6. How unbecoming a thing is it in me to live and act as I have done! Let me henceforth learn to measure and estimate my condition, rather by its usefulness to God than its content and ease to my flesh.

The *Poem.*

IF (1) fruit and service be indeed the end
To which my being and redemption tend,
Reason concludes, that state of all the rest
Which is most serviceable to be best.
And such a state experience shews to lye
'Twixt (2) fulness, and a pinching poverty.
This golden *Mean*, is worth a golden *Mine*;
He that hath this, should be (3) asham'd to whine.
The full fed Christian like the (4) Ox i'th' stall,
Is no way fit to work or plow withall.
And (5) penury like *Pharaoh's* leaner kine,
Devours the fattest portions of our time.
That man with whom this earthly (6) pleasure's found,
Or in whose heart those anxious (7) cares abound;
And yet can walk by Scripture rule and line,
Will need a better head and heart than mine.
A single (8) staff the traveller may find
Of use, and service; but if you should bind
A bundle of them to his back, they'l make
Him slack his pace and cry my shoulders (9) ake.
I am (1) a traveller, this world's my way.
A single staff may be of use to stay
My feeble body, if it do not crack,
By too hard (2) leaning on it; but my back
Will bear no more: Alas, I soon should tire:
And more than (3) one I cannot well desire.

(1) Isa. 5. 2.
(2) Prov. 30. 7, 8, 9.
(3) Heb. 13. 5.
(4) Deut. 32. 15
(5) Prov. 30. 9.
(6) Luke 8 14.
(7) Luk. 8. 14.
(8) Mark 6. 8
(9) Hab. 2. 6.
(1) Ps. 119. 19. Heb. 11. 13, 14.
(2) Job 8. 15. Isa. 36 6.
(3) Heb. 13. 5.

Lord,

Lord, to (4) prescribe to thee becomes me not,
I rather do (5) submit unto my (6) lot;
But yet let condescending grace admit
Thy servants (7) suit this once, and this is it.
The staff of bread (8) convenient let me have,
And manage it (9) discreetly, so 'twill save
Thy feeble servant from the mire and (1) dirt.
But more or less than this may do me hurt.
Or if thou say thy servant shall have none,
Then strengthen faith that I may go (2) alone.

(4) Job 21.12.
(5) Isa. 47.4.
(6) Psal. 16.5, 6, 7.
(7) Gen. 18.32.
(8) Prov. 30.8.
(9) Eccl. 6.2.
(1) Prov. 30.9.
(2) Hab. 3.17.

CHAP. V.

Spent barren Land you can restore and nourish.
Decayed Christians God can cause to flourish.

Upon the improvement of bad ground.

OBSERVATION.

WHen Land is spent out by tillage, or for want of manuring, the careful husbandman hath many ways to recover and bring it in heart again. He lets it lye fallow to give it rest, and time to recover it self, carries out his sand, lime and compost, to refresh and quicken it again, and in pasture and medow ground, will wash it (if possible) with a current of water, or the float of the ways after a fall of rain, which is to the earth as a spring of new blood to a consumptive body. He cuts down and kills the weeds that suck it out, and causes them to make restitution of what they purloined from it, by rotting upon the place where they grew. As careful are they to recover it when it is spent, as an honest Physician is of his Patient in a languishing condition, for he knows his field will be as grateful to him, and fully requite his care and cost.

APPLI-

APPLICATION.

AS man's, so God's Husbandry is sometimes out of case not by yielding too many crops, but too few. The mystical Husbandman hath some fields (I mean particular societies and persons) who were once fragrant and fruitful like a field which God hath blessed, but are now decayed and grown barren; whose gleanings formerly were more than their vintage now; the things that are in them are ready to dye, *Rev.* 3. 3. 'Tis possible, yea, too common for gracious souls to be reduced to a very low ebb, both of graces and comforts; how low I will not say: Our *Brittish Divines* tell us, That grace indeed cannot be totally intermitted; nor finally lost; but there may be an omission of the act, though not an amission of the habit: the act may be perverted, though the faith cannot be subverted; it may be shaken in, though not shaken out; its fruits may fall, but its sap lyes hid in its root; they demerit the loss of the kingdom, but lose it not effectively; the effect of justification may be suspended, but the state of the justified cannot be dissolved.

How far true grace in a believer may fail.

Gratia nec totaliter intermittitur, nec finaliter amittitur. Actus omittitur, habitus non amittitur. Actio pervertitur, fides non subvertitur. Concutitur, non excutitur. Defluit fructus, latet succus. Jus ad regnum amittunt demeratorie, non effective. Effectus justificationis suspenditur, at status justificati non dissolvitur. Suff. Britt.

Certain it is, one that like *Paul*, hath been rapt up with joy, even to the third heavens, and cryed, *I am more than a conqueror, who can separate me from the love of God?* May at another time lye mourning as at the gates of death, crying, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* One that hath walked in sweet communion with God, sunning himself in the light of his countenance, may afterwards *walk in darkness, and see no light*, Isa. 5. 10. He that hath cast anchor within the vail, and rode securely in the peaceful harbour of assurance, may seem to feel his Anchor of

of hope come home to him, and go adrift into the stormy Ocean again, crying with the Church, *Lam.* 3. 18. *My hope is perished from the Lord.* His calm and clear Air may be overcast and clouded, yea filled with storms and tempests, lightnings and thunders; his graces, like undergrounded flowers in the Winter, may all disappear, and hide their beautiful heads.

To *God* he may say, I am cast out of thy sight; I know thou canst do much, but wilt thou shew wonders to the dead?

To the *Promises* he may say, you are sweet things indeed, but what have I to do with you? I could once indeed rejoyce in you, as my portion; but now I doubt I grasped a shadow, a fancy instead of you. To *Saints* he may say, turn away from me, labour not to comfort me, O do not spill your precious ointment of consolation upon my head, for what have I to do with comfort? to former *experiences*, he may say in his haste, you are all lyars. To the *light of Gods Countenance*, he may say, fare well sweet light, I shall behold thee no more. To *Satan*, he may say, O mine enemy, thou hast at last prevailed against me, thou art stronger than I, and hast overcome. To *duties and ordinances*, he may say, where is the sweetness I once found in you? you were once sweeter to me than the honey comb, but now as tastless as the white of an egg. O sad relapse? deplored change! *quantum mutatus ab illo?*

But will God leave his poor creatures helpless in such a case as this? Shall their leaf fall, their branches wither, their joy, their life, their heart depart? will he see their graces fainting, their hopes gasping, the new creature panting, the things that are in them ready to dye, and will he not regard it? Yes, yes, *There is hope of a tree if it be cut down, and the root thereof wax old in the earth, yet by the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs, like a plant,* Job 14. 8, 9. This poor declined soul, as sad as it sits at the gates of hell, may rouze up it self at last, and say to *Satan* that stands triumphing over him, *Rejoyce not over me, O mine enemy, for though I fall, yet I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a*

light

light unto me, Mic. 7. 8. He may raise up himself upon his bed of languishing for all this, and say to *God*, *though thou hast chastened me sore, yet hast thou not given me over unto death.* He may turn about to the Saints, that have mourned for him, and with a lightsom countenance say, *I shall not die but live, and declare the works of the Lord.* He may say to the *Promises*, you are the true and faithful sayings of God, my unbelief did bely you; I said in my haste, you were lyars; but I eat my words, I am ashamed of my folly. Surely, O Soul, there is yet hope in thine end, thou mayst be restored, *Psal.* 23. 3. Thou mayst yet recover thy verdure, and thy dew be as the dew of herbs. For,

1. Is he not thy Father, and a Father full of compassions and bowels? And can a father stand by his dying Child, see his fainting fits, hear his melting groans, and pity begging looks; and not help him; especially having restoratives by him that can do it? Surely, *as a father pities his own Children, so will thy God pity thee*, Psal. 130. 12, 13. *He will spare thee, as a father spareth his own Son that serves him*, Mal. 3. 17. Hark, how his bowels yearn? *I have surely heard* Ephraim *bemoaning himself, is not* Ephraim *my dear Son? is he not a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still, I will surely have mercy on him*, Jer. 31. 20.

2. Doth he not know thy life would be altogether useless to him, if he should not restore thee? what service art thou fit to perform to him, in such a condition? *Thy days will consume like smoak, whilst thy heart is smitten and withered like grass*, Psal. 102. 3, 4. Thy months will be months of vanity, they will flye away and do no good, *Job* 7. 3. If he will but quicken thee again, then thou must call upon his name, *Psal.* 80. 18. but in a dead and languishing condition, thou art no more fit for any work of God, than a sick man is for manual labours; and surely he hath not put those precious and excellent graces of his spirit within thee for nothing; they were planted there for fruit and service, and therefore doubtless he will revive thee again.

3. Yea, dost thou not think he sees thine inability to bear such a condition long? he knows *thy spirit would fail before him*,

him, and the soul which he hath made, Isa. 57. 16. *David* told him as much, in the like condition, *Psal.* 143. 7. 8. *Hear me speedily, O Lord, for my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like unto those that go down into the pit*; q. d. Lord, make haste and recover my languishing soul; otherwise, whereas thou hast now a *sick child*, thou wilt shortly have a *dead child*.

And in like manner *Job* expostulated with him, *Job* 6. 1, 2, 3, 11, 12. *My grief is heavier than the sand of the Sea, my words are swallowed up, for the Arrows of the Almighty are within me; and the poyson thereof drinks up my spirits: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me, what is my strength that I should hope? is my strength the strength of stones? or are my bones of brass?* So Chap. 7. 12. *Am I a Sea, or a Whale?* &c. Other troubles a man may, but this he cannot bear, *Prov.* 18. 14. And therefore doubtless seasonable and gracious revivings will come, *He will not stir up all his wrath, for he remembers thou art but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again*, Psal. 78. 38, 39. He hath ways enough to do it, if he do but unveil his blessed face and make it shine again upon thee, thou art saved, *Psal.* 80. 3. the manifestations of his love, will be to thy soul as showers to the parched grass; thy soul that now droops and hangs the wing, shall then revive and leap for joy, *Isa.* 61. 1. A new face shall come upon thy graces, they shall bud again, and blossom as a Rose; if he do but send a spring of auxiliary grace into thy soul, to actuate the dull habits of inherent grace, the work is done; then shalt thou return to thy first works again, *Rev.* 2. 4, 5. and sing, as in the days of thy youth.

Gratia gratiam postulat.

REFLECTIONS.

O this is my very case, saith many a poor Christian; thus my soul languishes and droops from day to day: 'tis good news indeed, that God both can and will restore my soul, but sad that I should fall into such a state. How unlike am I to what once I was? Surely, as the old men wept when they saw how short the second *Temple* came of the glory of the

first, ſo may I ſit down and weep bitterly, to conſider how much my firſt love, and firſt duties excelled the preſent. For,

1. A Convictive Reflection. Is my heart ſo much in heaven now, as it wont to be? Say, O Soul! doſt thou not remember, when like the beloved Diſciple thou *layeſt* in *Jeſus* boſome? how didſt thou ſweeten communion with him? how reſtleſs and impatient waſt thou in his abſence! Divine withdrawments were to thee as the hell of hell: What a burden was the World to me in thoſe days! Had it not been for conſcience of my duty, I could have been willing to let all lye, that communion with Chriſt might ſuffer no interruption. When I awaked in the night, how was the darkneſs enlightned by the heavenly glimpſes of the countenance of my God upon me? How did his company ſhorten thoſe hours, and beguile the tediouſneſs of the night? O my ſoul, ſpeak thy experience, is it now as it was then! No, no, thoſe days are paſt and gone, and thou become much a ſtranger to that heavenly life. Art thou able with truth to deny this charge? When occaſionally I paſs by thoſe places, which were once to me as *Jacob's Bethel* to him; I ſigh at the remembrance of former paſſages betwixt me and heaven there; and ſay with *Job*, Chap. 29. *O that it were with me as in moneths paſt, as in the days when God preſerved me, when his candle ſhined upon my head, when by his light I walked through darkneſs, when the Almighty was yet with me, when I put on righteouſneſs and it cloathed me, when my glory was freſh in me! when I remember theſe things, my ſoul is poured out within me.*

2. Is thy obedience to the commands of Chriſt, and motions to duty, as free and chearful as they were wont to be? Call to mind, my ſoul, the times when thou waſt born down the ſtream of Love to every duty, if the ſpirit did but whiſper to thee, ſaying, *Seek my face*, how did my ſpirit eccho to his calls? ſaying, *Thy face Lord will I ſeek*, Pſal. 27. 8. If God had any work to be done, how readily did I offer my ſervice? Here am I Lord, ſend me. My ſoul made me as the chariots of *Aminadab*; Love oyled the wheels of my affection, and *his commandments were not grievous*, 1 John 5. 3. *Non tardat unda*

nucia rota. There were no such quarrellings with the command, no such excuses and delayes as there are now. No, such was my love to Christ, and delight to do his will, that I could no more keep back my self from duty, than a man that's carried away in a crowd.

Or lastly, tell me, O my soul dost thou bemoan thy self or grieve so tenderly for sin, and for grieving the holy Spirit of God, as thou wast wont to do? when formerly I had fallen by the hand of a temptation, how was I wont to lye in tears at the Lord's feet, bemoaning my self? how did I hasten to my Closet, and there cry like *Ezra*, Chap. 9. 6. *O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to look up unto thee*, How did I sigh and weep before him, and like *Ephraim*, smite upon my thigh, saying, *What have I done?* Ah my soul! how didst thou work, strive, and cast about, how to recover thy self again? hast thou forgotten, how thou wouldst sometimes look up and sigh bitterly; Ah! what a God have I provoked? what love and goodness have I abused? sometimes look in and weep, Ah! what motions did I withstand? what a good spirit have I grieved? Ah! my soul thou would'st have abhor'd thy self, thou could'st never have born it, had thy heart been as stupid and as relentless then as now. If ever a poor soul had reason to dissolve it self into tears for its sad relapses, I have.

2. A supporting Reflection.

But yet mourn not, O my soul, as one without hope. Remember, *There is hope in* Israel concerning this thing. As low as thy condition is, it is not desperate, it is not a disease that scorns a Remedy; many a man that hath been stretcht out for dead, hath revived again, and lived many a comfortable day in the World; many a tree that hath cast both leaf and fruit, by the skill of a prudent Husbandman, hath been recovered again, and made both flourishing and fruitful. Is it not easier think'st thou, to recover a languishing man to health, than a dead man to life? and yet this God did for me, *Eph.* 2.1. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? *Though my soul draw nigh to the pit, and my life to the destroyers, yet he can send me a messenger, one among a thousand, that shall declare to me my uprightness, then shall he deliver me from going down into the pit,*

my fleſh ſhall be freſher than a Childs, and I ſhall return to the days of my youth, Job 33.21. Though my flouriſh, and much of my fruit too be gone, and I am a withering tree; yet as long as the root of the matter is in me, there is more hope of ſuch a poor decayed withered tree, than of the hypocrite that wants ſuch a root, in all his glory and bravery. His Sun ſhall ſet and never riſe again; but I live in expectation of a ſweet morning, after this dark night.

Rouz up therefore, O my ſoul, ſet thy faith awork on Chriſt for quickning grace, for he hath life in himſelf, and quickens whomſoever he will, *Joh.* 7.38. Stir up that little which remains, *Rev.* 3.2. Haſt thou not ſeen lively flames proceed from glimmering and dying ſparks, when carefully collected and blown up? get amongſt the moſt lively and quickning Chriſtians; as *iron ſharpens iron, ſo will theſe ſet an edge upon thy dull affections*, Prov, 27.17. Acts 18.15. But above all, cry mightily to the Lord for quickning, he will not deſpiſe thy cry. The moans of a diſtreſſed Child, work upon the bowels of a tender father. And be ſure to keep within thy view, the great things of eternity, which are ready to be revealed; live in the believing and ſerious contemplations of them, and be dead if thou canſt. 'Tis true, thou haſt Reaſon enough from thy condition, to be for ever humbled; but no reaſon at all from thy God, to be in the leaſt diſcouraged.

The *Poem.*

(1) Joh. 15.1
(2) 1 Cor. 3 9.
(3) Pſal. 4. 3.
(4) Job 19.3,4.
(5) Hoſ. 14.5,6.
(6) Hoſ. 6. 3.

THou art the (1) Husbandman, and I
A worthleſs plot of (2) Husbandry,
Whom ſpecial love did ne'retheleſs
Divide (3) from natures wilderneſs.
Then did the (4) Sun-ſhine of thy face
And ſweet (5) illapſes of thy grace
Like (6) *April* ſhowers, and warming gleams
Diſtil its dews, reflect its beams.

My

My dead (7) affections then were green,
And hopeful (8) buds on them were seen:
These into duties soon were (9) turn'd.
In which my heart within me (10) burn'd.
O halcyon days! thrice happy state!
Each place was (1) *Bethel*, heavens gate.
What sweet discourse! what heavenly (2) talk!
Whilst with thee I did daily (3) walk!
Mine eyes o'rflow, my heart doth (4) sink;
As oft as on those days I think.
For (5) strangeness now is got between
My God and me, as may be seen
By what is (6) now, and what was then;
'Tis just as if I were (7) two men.
My fragrant branches (8) blasted be,
No fruits like those that I can see.
Some (9) Canker-worm lies at my root.
Which (1) fades my leaves, destroys my fruit.
My soul is (2) banished from thy sight,
For this it (3) mourneth day and night.
Yet why dost thou (4) desponding lye?
With (5) *Jonah* cast a backward eye.
Sure in thy God help may be had,
There's precious (6) balm in *Gilead*.
That God that made me spring at first,
When I was barren, (7) and accurst,
Can much more easily (8) restore
My soul to what it was before.
'Twas (9) *Hemans* (1) *Job's* (2) and *David's* case,
Yet all recover'd were by grace.
A word, a (3) smile on my poor soul;
Will make it perfect, sound, and whole.
A (4) glance of thine hath soon dissolv'd
A soul in sin, and grief involv'd.
Lord, if thou (5) canst not work the cure,
I am contented to endure.

(7) Jer. 2. 3.
(8) Cant. 7. 12.
(9) Acts 9 11.
(10) Lu. 24. 32.
(1) Gen. 28. 16, 17.
(2) Exod. 34. 29.
(3) Gen. 6. 7.
(4) Psal. 42. 6.
(5) Cant. 5. 6.
(6) Rev. 2 5.
(7) 2 Chr. 17. 3
(8) Psal. 102. 4.
(9) Isa. 59. 2.
(1) Isa. 64. 6.
(2) Psal. 88. 6, 14.
(3) Psal. 77. 2.
(4) Psal. 42. 11.
(5) Jon. 2. 4.
(6) Jer. 1. 22.
(7) Eze. 16. 4.
(8) Psal. 23. 3.
(9) Psal. 88.
(1) Job 14.
(2) Psal. 30.
(3) Psal. 80. 3.
(4) Luk. 22. 61, 62.
(5) Jer. 23. 17.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Upon the uncurableneſs of ſome bad ground.

No skill can mend the miry ground, and ſure
Some Souls the Goſpel leaves as paſt a cure,

OBSERVATION.

ALthough the induſtry and skill of the Husbandman can make ſome ground that was uſeleſs and bad, good for tillage or paſture, and improve that which was barren, and by his coſt and pains make one Acre worth ten; yet ſuch is the nature of ſome rocky or miry ground, where the water ſtands, and there is no way to cleanſe it, that it can never be made fruitful. The Husbandman is fain to let it alone, as an incurable piece of waſt and worthleſs ground; and though the Sun and Clouds ſhed their influences on it, as well as upon better Land, yet that doth not at all mend it. Nay, the more ſhowers it receives, the worſe it proves. For theſe do no way fecundate or improve it; nothing thrives there, but worthleſs flags and ruſhes.

APPLICATION.

MAny alſo there are under the Goſpel, who are given over by God to judicial blindneſs, hardneſs of heart, a reprobate ſence, and perpetual barrenneſs; ſo that how excellent ſoever the means are which they enjoy, and how efficacious ſoever, to the converſion, edification and ſalvation of others; yet they ſhall never do their ſouls good, *Ezek.* 47. 9, 11. *Every thing whereſoever the River comes ſhall live, but the miry places thereof, and the marſhes thereof ſhall never be healed but be given to ſalt*; (i. e.) given to an obſtinate and everlaſting barrenneſs. Compare *Deut.* 9. 23. By theſe waters, ſaith judicious Mr. *Strong*, underſtand the doctrine of the Goſpel; as *Rev.* 21. 2. a River of water of life, clear as Cryſtal.

Spiritual barrenneſs, p. 8.

Cryſtal. *Hic fluvius eſt uberrima doctrina Chriſti*, ſaith Mr. *Brightman.* This River is the moſt fruitful doctrine of Chriſt, yet theſe waters do not heal the miry mariſh places, (*i. e.*) men that live unfruitfully under Ordinances, who are compared to miry and mariſh places in three reſpects.

(1.) In miry places the water hath not free paſſage, but ſtands and ſettles there. So it is with theſe barren Souls; therefore the Apoſtle prayes that the Goſpel may run and be glorified, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 1. The word is ſaid to run, when it meets with no ſtop, *Cum libere propagatur*, when it is freely propagated and runs through the whole man; when it meets with no ſtop either in the mouth of the ſpeaker, or hearts of the hearers, as it doth in theſe.

(2.) In a miry place, the earth and water is mixt together; this mixture makes mire. So when the truths of God do mix with the corruptions of men, that they either hold ſome truths, and yet live in their luſts, or elſe when men do make uſe of the truths of God to juſtifie and plead for their ſins. Or,

(3.) When as in a miry place the longer the water ſtands in it, the worſe it grows; ſo the longer men abide under Ordinances, the more filthy and polluted they grow: Theſe are the miry places that cannot be healed, their diſeaſe is incurable, deſperate.

O this is a ſad caſe, and yet very common! Many perſons are thus given over; as incorrigible and hopeleſs, *Rev.* 22. 11. *Let him that is filthy, be filthy ſtill.* Je. 6. 29. *Reprobate ſilver ſhall men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them,* Iſa. 6. *Go make the heart of this people fat, their ears dull,* &c.

Chriſt executes by the Goſpel that Curſe upon many ſouls, which he denounced againſt the fig-tree, *Mat.* 21. 19. *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth for ever, and immediately the fig-tree withered away.* To be given up to ſuch a condition, is a fearful judgment indeed, a curſe with a witneſs; the ſum of all plagues, miſeries and judgments, a fatal ſtroke at the root it ſelf. It's a wo to have a bad heart, (ſaith one) but it's the depth of wo, to have a heart that ſhall never be made better. To be barren under the Goſpel is a ſore judgment, but to have

have that *pertinax ſterilitas*, a pertinacious barrenneſs; this is to be twice dead, and pluckt up by the root, as *Jude* ſpeaks.

And to ſhew you the woful miſerable ſtate and plight of ſuch men, let the following particulars be weighed. (1) It's a ſtroke at the ſoul it ſelf, an inward ſpiritual judgement; and by how much the more inward and ſpiritual any judgment is, by ſo much the more dreadful and lamentable. As ſoul mercies are the beſt of mercies; ſo, ſoul-judgments, are the ſaddeſt of all judgments. If it were but a temporal ſtroke upon the body, the loſs of an eye, an ear, a hand, a foot, though in it ſelf it would be a conſiderable loſs; yet it were nothing to this. *Omnia Deus dedit duplicia* (ſaith *Chryſoſtom*) ſpeaking of bodily members; God hath given men double members, two eyes, if one be loſt, the other ſupplies its wants; two hands, two ears, two feet, that the failing of one may be ſupplied by the help of the other; *animam vero unam*; but one ſoul, if that periſh, there is not another to ſupply its loſs. The ſoul, ſaith an *Heathen*, is the man, that which is ſeen is not the man. The Apoſtle calls the body a vile body, *Phil.* 3.21. and ſo it is compared with the ſoul; and *Daniel* calls it the *Sheath*, which is but a contemptible thing to the ſword which is in it, O it were far better that many bodies periſh, than one ſoul; that every member were made the ſeat and ſubject of the moſt exquiſite torture, than ſuch a judgment ſhould fall upon the ſoul.

(2.) It's the ſevereſt ſtroke God can inflict upon the ſoul in this life, to give it up to barrenneſs; becauſe it cuts off all hopes, fruſtrates all means, nothing can be a bleſſing to him. If one come from the dead, if Angels ſhould deſcend from heaven to preach to him; there is no hope of him. If God ſhut up a man, who can open? *Job* 12.14. As there was none found in heaven or earth, that could open the ſeals of that book, *Lev.* 5.5. ſo is there no opening by the hand of the moſt able and skilful Miniſtry, thoſe ſeals of hardneſs, blindneſs and unbelief, thus impreſſed upon the ſpirit. Whom juſtice ſo locks up, Mercy will never let out. This is that which makes up the *Anathema Maranatha*, 1 Cor. 16.22.

which

which is the dreadfulleſt curſe in all the book of God, accurſed till the Lord come.

(3.) 'Tis the moſt indiſcernable ſtroke to themſelves that can be, and by that ſo much the more deſperate. Hence there is ſaid to be powred out upon them the ſpirit of ſlumber, *Iſa.* 29. 10. *The Lord hath powred out upon you the ſpirit of deep ſleep, and hath cloſed your eyes. Montanus* renders it, The Lord hath mingled upon you the ſpirit of deep ſleep. And ſo it is an alluſion to a ſoporiferous Medicine mingled and made up of *opium* and ſuch like ſtupefactive ingredients, which caſts a man into ſuch a dead ſleep, that do what you will to him, he feels, he knows it not. *Make their eyes heavy, and their ears dull; leſt they ſhould ſee, and hear, and be converted,* Iſa. 6. 9, 10. This is the heart which cannot repent, which is ſpoken of, *Rom.* 2. 5. For men are not ſenſible at all of this judgment, they do not in the leaſt ſuſpect it, and that is their miſery. Though they be curſed trees which ſhall never bear any fruit to life, yet many times they bear abundance of other fair and pleaſant fruits to the eye, excellent gifts and rare endowments? And theſe deceive and undo them. *Mat.* 7.22. *We have propheſied in thy name*; this makes the wound deſperate, that there is no finding of it, no probe to ſearch it.

(4.) 'Tis a ſtroke that cuts off from the ſoul all the comfort and ſweetneſs of Religion. A man may pray, hear, and confer, but all thoſe duties are dry ſtalks unto him, which yield no meat, no ſolid ſubſtantial nutriment; ſome common touches upon the affections he may ſometimes find in duty, the melting voice or Rhetorick of the Preacher may perhaps ſtrike his natural affections, as another Tragical ſtory pathetically delivered may do; but to have any real communion with God in Ordinances, any diſcoveries or views of the beauty of the Lord in them, that he cannot have; for theſe are the ſpecial effects and operations of the Spirit, which are alwayes reſtrained.

God hath ſaid to ſuch, as he did to them, *Gen.* 6. 3. *My ſpirit ſhall no longer ſtrive with them*; and then what ſweetneſs is there in Ordinances? What is the word ſeparated from

the Spirit, but a dead Letter? it's the spirit that quickens, 2 *Cor.* 2. 3. Friend, thou must know that the Gospel works not like *a natural cause* upon those that hear it; if so, the effect would alwayes follow, unless miraculously stopt and hindred; but it works like *a moral instituted cause*, whose efficacy and success depends upon the arbitrary concurrence of the Spirit with it. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit*, Joh. 3. 8. *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth.* Ordinances are as the old pool of *Bethesda*, which had its healing vertue only when the *Angel* moved the waters; but the spirit never moves savingly upon the waters of Ordinances, for the healing of these souls, how many years soever they lye by them. Though others feel a Divine power in them, yet they shall not. As the men that travelled with *Paul*, when Christ appeared to him from heaven, they saw the light, but heard not the voice, which he heard to salvation: So it is with these, they see the Ministers, hear the words, which are words of salvation to others, but not so to them. Concerning these miserable souls, we may sigh and say to Christ, as *Martha* did concerning her brother *Lazarus*; Lord if thou hadst been here in this Sermon, or in this prayer, this soul had not remained dead. But here is the woe that lies upon him, God is departed from the means, and none can help him.

(5.) 'Tis such a stroke upon the spirit of man, as is a fearful sign of his eternal reprobation. 'Tis true we cannot positively say of a man in this life, he is a reprobate, one that God will never shew mercy to; but yet there are some probable marks of it upon some men in this world, and they are of a trembling consideration where-ever they appear? of which this is one of the saddest, 2 *Cor.* 4. 3. *If our Gospel be hid, 'tis hid to those that are lost, in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not; lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them.* So *Acts* 13. 48. *As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed. Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep*, Joh. 10. 26. And again, *Mat.* 13. 11. *To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom, but to them it is not given.* There cannot

not be a more dreadful Character of a person marked out for Wrath, than to continue under the Ordinances, as the Rocks and miry places do under the natural influences of heaven. What blessed opportunities had *Judas?* he was under Christ's own Ministry, he often heard the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; he was night and day in his company, yet never the better; and why? because he was *the son of perdition*; that is, a man appointed to destruction and wrath.

(6) And lastly, to add no more. 'Tis such a stroke of God upon the souls of men, as immediately foreruns hell and damnation, *Heb.* 6.8. *But that which beareth thorns and bryars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burnt.* So that look as some Saints in this world, have had a prelibation or foretaste of heaven, which the Scripture calls *the earnest of the Spirit*; so this is a precursor of hell, a sign of wrath at the door. We may say of it, as 'tis said of the pale horse in the *Revelation*, that hell follows it. *If a man abide not in me* (saith Christ, *John* 15.6.) *he is cast forth as a branch and withered*; which is the very state of these barren, cursed souls, And what follows? Why, saith he, men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. Lo this is the vengeance which the Gospel executes upon this barren ground.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The sincere souls reflection.

Well then, blessed be God that made me feel the saving power of the Gospel. O, let God be exalted for ever for this mercy! that how defective soever I am in common gifts, though I have a dull understanding, a leaking memory, a stammering tongue; yet I have felt, and do feel the power of the Gospel upon my heart. I bless thee (my God) that although I labour under many spiritual infirmities, yet I am not sick of this incurable disease. I have given thee indeed just cause to inflict and execute this dreadful curse upon me also, but thou hast not only dealt with me after my deserts; but according to the riches of thy mercy. Some little fruit I

bring forth, and what it is, is by vertue of my union with *Jesus Christ*, *Rom.* 7. 4. And this hath more in it as to my comfort, than all the glittering gifts and splendid performances of the most glorious hypocrite can yield to him. If I might have my choice (saith one) I would chuse and prefer the most despicable and sordid work of a rustick *Christian*, before all the victories of *Alexander* and triumphs of *Cæsar*. *Blessed therefore be the Lord who hath abounded unto me, in all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things in Christ Jesus.*

I cannot remember a Sermon as another can, but blessed be God that I am able to savor it, and feel it; that I have an heart to love, and a will to obey, all that God discovers to be my duty.

2. The formal Professors Reflection.

O, then, how litle cause have I to make my boast of Ordinances, and glory in my external priviledges, who never bear spiritual fruit under them? If I well consider my condition, there is matter of *trembling*, and not of *glorying* in these things. It may be, while I have been glorying in them, and lifting up my secure heart upon them, the Lord hath been secretly blasting my soul under them, and insensibly executing this horrible curse by them. Shall I boast, that with *Capernaum*, *I am lifted up to heaven*, since I may with her at last be cast down to hell? and if so, Lord, what hell will my hell be? it will be more tolerable for *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* than for me. It drew tears from the eyes of *Christ*, when he was looking upon *Jerusalem*, under the same consideration that I doubt I have cause to look upon my own soul, *Luke* 19.41. *He wept over it, saying, if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.* So long I have been a hearer, a professor of the Gospel, so many years I have injoyed its distinguishing Ordinances, but have they not been all dry and empty things to me? hath not the spirit of formality acted me in them? have not self ends, and worldly respects lain at the bottom of my best duties? Have not my discourses in communion with the Saints been Trade words, speaking what I have learnt, but not felt? sad is my condition now; but it would be desperate and irrecoverable, shouldst thou execute this curse upon me.

And

And what may I think of my condition? Lord, I acknowledge my unprofitableness under the means hath been shameful; and this hath made my condition doubtful. I have often trembled for fear, lest my root had been blasted by such a curse; but if so, whence is this trembling? Whence these fears and sorrows about it? doth such fruit grow in that soyl which thou hast cursed? I am told but now, that on whom this judgment falls, to them thou giveſt an heart that cannot repent. Lord, I bless thee for these evidences of freedom from the curse; for the fruits of fear, sorrow, and holy jealousie. The Laws of men spare for the fruits sake, and wilt not thou spare me also my God, if there be found in me a blessing in the bud, *Isa.* 65. 8.

3. The less fruitful Christians Reflect on.

Romanæ leges pœnam prægnanti deferunt. Chrysost.

To conclude, what a serious Reflection should this occasion in every dispenser of the Gospel? how should he say when he goes to preach the Gospel, I am now going to preach that word, which is to be *a savour of life or death to these souls*; upon how many of my poor hearers may the curse of perpetual barrenness be executed this day! O how should such a thought melt his heart into compassion over them, and make him beg hard, and plead earnestly with God for a better issue of the Gospel than this upon them?

4. The Gospel Preachers Reflection.

The *Poem.*

YOu that besides your pleasant fruitful fields,
Have useless bogs, and rocky ground that yields
You no advantage, nor doth quit your cost,
But all your pains and charges on them's lost,
Hearken to me, Ile teach you how to get
More profit by them, than if they were set
At higher Rents than what your Tenants pay
For your most fertile Lands; and here's the way,
Think when you view them, why the Lord hath chose
These, as (1) Emblems to decipher those

(1) Eze 47. 11.

That

That under Gospel-grace grow worse and (2) worse;
For means are fruitless; where the Lord doth (3) curse.
Sweet showers descend, the Sun his beams reflects
On both (4) alike; but not with like effects.
Observe, and see how after the sweet showers
The grass and corn (5) revive; the fragrant (6) flowers
Shoot forth their beauteous heads, the valleys (7) sing,
All fresh, and green as in the verdant spring.
But rocks are barren still, and (8) bogs are so;
Where naught but flags, (9) and worthless rushes grow.
Upon this marish ground there lies this curse,
The more rain falls; by so much more the worse.
Even so the (1) dews of grace that sweetly fall,
From Gospel (2) clouds, are not (3) alike to all.
The gracious soul doth (4) germinate and bud,
But to the Reprobate it doth (5) no good.
He's like the withered (6) fig-tree void of fruit;
A fearful curse hath smote his very (7) root.
The heart's made fat, the (9) eyes with blindness seal'd;
The piercing truths the Gospel ere reveal'd,
Shall be to him but as the Sun and Rain
Are to obdurate rocks: (10) fruitless and vain.
Be this your meditation when you walk
By rocks, and fenny grounds, thus learn to talk
With your own souls: and let it make you fear
Lest that's your case that is described here.
This is the best improvement you can make
Of such bad ground: good soul, I pray thee take
Some pains about them; though they barren be,
Thou seest how they may yield sweet fruits to thee.

(2) 2 Tim. 3. 13.
(3) Heb. 6. 8.
(4) Mat. 5. 45.
(5) 2 Sam. 23. 4.
(6) Cant. 2. 12.
(7) Psal. 65. 13.
(8) Ezek. 47. 11.
(9) Job 8. 11
(1) Deut. 22. 2.
(2) Isa. 5. 6.
(3) 2 Cor. 2. 16
(4) Psal. 92. 13
(5) Isa. 6. 9, 10.
(6) Mar. 11. 20
(7) Isa. 5. 24.
(9) Isa. 6. 10.
(10) Luke 8. 14.
Jer. 17. 5, 6.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The Plowman guides his Plow with care and skill.
So doth the Spirit, in sound conviction still.

Upon the plowing of Corn-land.

OBSERVATION.

IT requires not only strength, but much skill and judgment, to manage and guide the plow. The Hebrew word which we translate to plow, signifies to be intent, as an Artificer is about some curious piece of work. The plow must neither go too shallow nor too deep in the earth; it must not indent the ground by making crooked furows, nor leap and make baulks in good ground; but be guided as to a just depth of earth, so to cast the furrow in a streight line, that the floor or surface of the field may be made plain, As it is *Isa.* 28.25. And hence that expression, *Luke 9. 62. He that puts his hand to the plow, and looks back, is not fit for the Kingdom of Heaven.* The meaning is, that as he that plows, must have his eyes always forward, to guide and direct his hand in casting the furrows straight and even; (for his hand will be quickly out when his eye is off.) So he that heartily resolves for heaven, must addict himself wholly and intently to the business of Religion, and not have his mind intangled with the things of this world, which he hath left behind him; whereby it appears, that the right management of the plow, requires as much skill as strength.

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APPLICATION.

THis observation in *nature*, serves excellently to shadow forth this proposition in *Divinity*. That the work of the Spirit in convincing and humbling the heart of a sinner, is a work wherein much of the wisdom, as well as power of God is discovered. The work of repentance and saving contri-

Glassius Rhet. sacra, p. 300.

Caryl on Job Chap. 4. v. 8.

contrition, is set forth in Scripture by this Metaphor of plowing, *Jer.* 4.3. *Hos.* 10.12. *Plow up your fallow ground*; that is, be convinced, humbled, and broken hearted for sin. And the resemblance betwixt both these works appears in the following particulars.

(1.) 'Tis a hard and difficult work to plow, 'tis reckoned one of the painfullest manual labours. It is also a very hard thing to convince and humble the heart of a secure, stout, and proud sinner, indurate in wickedness. What *Luther* saith of a dejected soul, *That it is as easie to raise the dead as to comfort such a one.* The same I may say of the secure, confident sinner. 'Tis as easie to rend the Rocks as to work saving contrition upon such a heart. *Citius ex pumice aquam*; all the melting language and earnest intreaties of the Gospel, cannot urge such a heart to shed a tear: Therefore its called a heart of stone, *Ezek.* 36.26. A firm Rock, *Amos* 6.12. *Shall horses run upon the Rock? will one plow there with Oxen?* yet when the Lord comes in the power of his spirit, these rocks do rend and yield to the power of the word.

(2.) The plow pierces deep into the bosom of the earth, makes (as it were) a deep gash or wound in the heart of it. So doth the Spirit upon the hearts of Sinners, he pierces their very souls by conviction, *Acts* 2.37. *When they heard this they were pricked* (or pierced point blank) *to the heart. Then the word divides the Soul and Spirit*, *Heb.* 4.12. It comes upon the conscience with pinching dilemma's, and tilts the sword of conviction so deep into their souls, that there is no stenching the blood, no healing this wound, till Christ himself come and undertake the cure. *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo*; this barbed arrow cannot be pulled out of their hearts by any but the hand that shot it in. Discourse with such a soul about his troubles, and he will tell you, that all the sorrows that ever he had in this world, loss of estate, health, children, or what ever else, are but flea-bites to this; this swallows up all other troubles. See how that Christian *Niobe*, *Luke* 7.38. is dissolved into tears. *Now deep calleth unto deep at the noise of his water spouts, when the waves & billows of God go over the soul.* Spiritual sorrows are deep waters, in which the

Κατενύγησαν *punctim cedo pungendo penetro.*

the stoutest and most magnamimous soul would sink and drown, did not *Jesus Christ* by a secret and supporting hand, hold it up by the chin.

(3) The plow rends the earth in parts and pieces, which before was united, and makes those parts hang loose, which formerly lay close. Thus doth the spirit of conviction rend in sunder the heart, and its most beloved lusts, *Joel* 2. 13. *Rent your hearts and not your garments*; that is, rather then your garments; for the sense is comparative, though the expression be negative. And this rending implyes, not only acute pain; flesh cannot be rent asunder without anguish, nor yet only force and violence; the heart is a stubborn and knotty piece, and will not easily yield, but it also implies a dis-union of parts united: As when a garment, or the earth, or any continuous body is rent; those parts are separated which formerly cleaved together. Sin and the soul were glewed fast together before, there was no parting of them, they would as soon part with their lives as with their *lusts*; but now when the heart is rent for them truly, it is also rent from them everlastingly, *Ezek.* 7. 15. to 19.

(4) The plow turns up, and discovers such things as lay hid in the bosom of the earth before, and were covered under a fair green surface, from the eyes of men. Thus when the Lord plows up the heart of a sinner by conviction, then the secrets of his heart are made manifest, 2 *Cor.* 14. 24, 25. the most secret and shameful sins will then out; *for the word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, the joynts and marrow, and is a quick discerner of the thoughts and secret intents of the heart*, *Heb.* 4. 12. It makes the fire burn inwardly, so that the soul hath no rest till confession give a vent to trouble. Fain would the shuffling sinner conceal and hide his shame, but the word follows him through all his sinfull shifts, and brings him at lae to be his own, both accuser, witness and judge.

(5) The work of the Plow is but *opus ordinabile*: a preparative work in order to fruit. Should the Husbandman plow his ground never so often, yet if the seed be not cast in

and quickned, in vain is the Harveſt expected. Thus conviction alſo is but a preparative to a farther work upon the ſoul of a ſinner. If it ſtick there, and go no farther, it proves but an abortive or untimely birth. Many have gone thus far, and there they have ſtuck; they have been like a field plowed, but not ſowed, which is a matter of trembling conſideration; for hereby their ſin is greatly aggravated, and their eternal miſery ſo much the more increaſed. O when a poor damned creature ſhall with horror reflect upon himſelf in hell, how near was I once under ſuch a Sermon, to converſion? My ſins were ſet in order before me, my conſcience awakened and terrified with the guilt of them; many purpoſes and reſolves I had then to turn to God, which had they been perfected by anſwerable executions, I had neve come to this place of torment; but there I ſtuck, and that was my eternal undoing. Many ſouls have I known ſo terrified with the guilt of ſin, that they have come roaring under horrors of conſcience to the Preacher; ſo that one would think ſuch a breach had been made between them and ſin, as could never be reconciled; and yet as angry as they were in that fit with ſin, they have hug'd and imbraced them again.

(6.) 'Tis beſt plowing when the earth is prepared and mollified by the ſhowers of rain, then the work goes on ſweetly and eaſily. And never doth the heart ſo kindly melt, as when the Goſpel Clouds diſſolve, and the free grace and love of *Jeſus Chriſt* comes ſweetly ſhowring down upon it; then it relents and mourns ingenuouſly, *Ezek.* 16. 63. That *thou mayeſt remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more becauſe of thy ſhame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou haſt done.* So it was with that poor penitent, *Luke* 7. 38. When the Lord Jeſus had diſcovered to her the ſuper-abounding riches of his grace, in the pardon of her manifold abominations; her heart melted within her, ſhe waſhed the feet of *Chriſt* with tears. And indeed there is as much difference betwixt the tears which are forced by the terrors of the Law, and thoſe which are extracted by the grace of the Goſpel, as there is betwixt thoſe of a condemned malefactor, who weeps to conſider the miſery he is under

der, and those of a pardoned malefactor, that receives his pardon at the foot of the ladder, and is melted by the mercy and clemency of his gracious Prince towards him.

The Plow kills those rank weeds that grow in the field, turns them up by the roots, buries and rots them. So doth saving conviction kill sin at the root, makes the soul sick of it, begets indignation in the heart against it, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. The word there signifies the rising of the stomach, and being angry even unto sickness; Religious wrath is the fiercest wrath, now the soul cannot endure sin, trembles at it. *I find a woman more bitter than death* (saith penitent *Solomon*) *Eccl.* 7. 26. Conviction like a surfeit, make the soul to loath what it formerly loved and delighted in. Ἀγανάκτησιν.

(8) That field is not well plowed, where the plow jumps and skips over good ground, and makes baulks, It must turn up the whole field alike; and that heart is not savingly convicted where any lust is spared and left untouched. Saving Conviction extends it self to all sins, not only to sin in general, with this cold confession, *I am a sinner:* but to the particulars of sin, yea, to the particular circumstances and aggravations of time; place, manner, occasions, thus and thus have I done to the sin of *nature*, as well as *practice*, *behold I was shapen in iniquity*, *Psal.* 51. 5. There must be no *baulking* of any sin, the sparing of one sin is a sure argument thou art not truly humbled for any sin. So far is the convinced soul from a studious concealment of a beloved sin, that it weeps over that more than over any other actual sin.

(9) New ground is much more easily plowed than that which by long lying out of tillage, is more consolidated and clung together, by deep rooted thorns and brambles, which render it difficult to the Plowman. This old ground is like an old sinner that hath lain a long time hardning under the means of grace. O the difficulty of convincing such a person! Sin hath got such a rooting in his heart, he is so habituated to the reproofs and calls of the word, that few such are wrought upon. How many young persons are called, to one obdurate, inveterate sinner? I do not say but God may call home such a soul at the eleventh hour; but I may say of these com-

compared with others, as *Solomon* ſpeaks, *Eccleſ.* 7. 28. *One man among a thouſand have I found*, &c. Few that have long reſiſted the Goſpel, that come afterwards to feel the ſaving efficacy thereof.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The true Converts Reflection.

O Grace, for ever to be admired! that God ſhould ſend forth his Word and Spirit to plow up my hard and ſtony heart! yea, mine, when he hath left ſo many of more tender, ingenious, ſweet, and melting tempers without any culture or means of grace. O bleſſed Goſpel! heart diſſolving voice! I have felt thine efficacy, I have experienced thy divine and irreſiſtible power; thou art indeed ſharper than any two edged ſword, and woundeſt to the heart; but thy wounds are the wounds of a friend. All the wounds thou haſt made in my ſoul, were ſo many doors opened to let in Chriſt, all the blows thou gaveſt my Conſcience, were but to beat off my ſoul from ſin, which I embraced and had retained to my everlaſting ruine, hadſt thou not ſeparated them and me. O wiſe and merciful Phyſician, thou didſt indeed bind me with cords of conviction and ſorrow; but it was only to cut out that ſtone in my heart, which had killed me if it had continued there. O, how did I ſtruggle and oppoſe thee, as if thou hadſt come with the ſword of an enemy, rather than the lance and probe of a skilful and tender hearted Phyſician? Bleſſed be the day wherein my ſins were diſcovered and imbittered! O happy ſorrows which prepared for ſuch matchleſs joys! O bleſſed hand which turned my ſalt waters into pleaſant wine! and after many pangs and ſorrows of ſoul didſt bring forth the mand-child of deliverance and peace.

2. The ſtubborn hearts Reflection.

But O, what a Rock of Adamant is this heart of mine that never yet was wounded and ſavingly pierced for ſin by the terrors of the Law, or melting voice of the Goſpel! long have I ſate under the word, but when did I feel a relenting pang? O my ſoul! my ſtupified ſoul! thou haſt got an *Antidote* againſt repentance, but haſt thou any againſt hell? thou canſt keep out the ſenſe of ſin now, but art thou

able

able to keep off the terrors of the Lord hereafter? If thou couldst turn a deaf ear to the sentence of Christ in the day of judgment, as easily as thou dost to the intreaties of Christ in the day of grace, it were somewhat; but surely there is no defence against that. Ah, fool that I am, to quench these convictions, unless I knew how to quench those flames they warn me of.

3. The miscarrying souls reflection.

And may not I challenge the first place among all the mourners in the world, who have lost all those convictions which at several times came upon me under the word? I have been often awakened by it, and filled with terrors and tremblings under it; but those troubles have soon worn off again, and my heart (like water removed from the fire) return'd to its native coldness. Lord what a dismal case am I in? Many convictions have I choaked and strangled, which it may be shall never more be revived, untill thou revive them against me in judgment. have I been in pangs, and brought forth nothing but wind; my troubles have wrought no deliverance, neither have my lusts fallen before them, my conscience indeed hath been sometimes sick with sin, yea, so sick as to vomit them up by an external partial reformation: but then with the dog have I returned again to my vomit, and now I doubt am given over to an heart that cannot repent. Oh that those travelling pangs could be quickned again! but alas! they are ceased. I am like a prisoner escaped, and again recovered, whom the Jaylor loads with double Irons. Surely, O my Soul! If the spiritual troubles return not again, they are but gone back, to bring eternal troubles. It is with thee, O my soul! as with a man whose bones have been broken and not well set; who must (how terrible soever it appear to him) endure the pain of breaking and setting them again, if ever he be made a sound man. O that I might rather chuse to be the Object of thy wounding mercy, than of thy sparing cruelty! if thou plow not up my heart again by compunction, I know it must be rent in pieces at last by desperation.

The

The *Poem*.

(1) Isa. 28.25 26.
(2) Mat. 13.5.
(3) Mat. 13.4.
(4) Mat. 13.38
(5) Acts 2.37.
(6) 2 Cor.6.1.
(7) 2 Cor .3.5.
(8) Phil. 1. 6.
(1) Joh. 16.8.
(2) 1 Thes.2.19
(3) Luke 15.11
(4) 2 Cor. 9. 10, 11.
(5) Mat. 13.6.
(6) 1 Thes.1.5
(7) Mark 8.14. mark 4.19.
(8) Heb. 6.5.
(9) Luke 8.14.
(1) Psal.126.6.

THere's (1) skill in plowing, that the Plowman knows
For if too (2) shallow, or to deep he goes;
The seed is either buried, or else may
To (3) Rooks and Daws become an easie prey.
This as a lively emblem, fitly may
Describe the blessed spirits work and way:
Whose work on souls, with this doth symbolize;
Betwixt them both, thus the resembiance lyes.
Souls are the (4) soyl, conviction is the (5) plow.
Gods workmen (6) draw, the spirit shews them how.
He guides the work, and in good ground, doth (7) bless
His workmens pains, with sweet and fair success.
The heart prepar'd, he scatters in the seed
Which in it's season springs, no fowl nor weed
Shall pick it up, or choak this springing corn;
Till it be (8) housed in the heavenly barn.
When thus (1) the spirit plows up the fallow ground,
When with such fruits, his servants work is (2) crown'd;
Let all the (3) friends of Christ, and soul say now;
As they pass by these fields (4) *God speed the Plow.*
Sometimes this Plow (5) thin, shelfy ground doth turn.
That little seed which springs, the Sun-beams burn.
The rest uncovered lyes, which fowls devour,
Alass! their hearts were (6) touched, but not with power.
The (7) cares and pleasures of this world have drown'd
The seed, before it peep'd above the ground,
Some springs indeed, the (8) scripture saith that some
Do taste the powers of the world to come.
These (9) Embryo's never come to timely birth,
Because the seed that's sown wants depth of earth.
Turn up, O God, the bottom of my heart;
And to the seed that's sown, do thou impart
Thy choicest blessing. Though I (1) weep and mourn;
In this wet seed-time; if I may return

With

With sheaves of joy; these fully will reward
My pains, and sorrows, be they ne're so hard.

CHAP. VIII.

The Choicest wheat is still reserv'd for seed;
But gracious principles are Choice indeed.

Upon the seed Corn.

OBSERVATION.

HUsbandmen are very careful and curious about their Seed-Corn, that it may not only be clean and pure, but the best and most excellent in its kind, *Isa.* 28.25. *He casteth in the principal Wheat.* If any be more full and weighty than other, that is reserved for seed. 'Tis usual with Husbandmen to pick and leasetheir Seed-Corn by hand that they may separate the Cockle and Darnel, and all the lighter and hollow grains from it, wherein they manifest their discretion, for according to the vigour and goodness of the seed, the fruit and production is like to be.

APPLICATION.

THe choice and Principal Seed-corn with which the fields are sowed, after they are prepared for it, doth admirably shadow forth those excellent principles of Grace infused into the regenerate soul. Their agreement, as they are both seed, is obvious in the ten following particulars, and their excellency above other principles in seven more.

1. The earth at first naturally brought forth Corn, and every Seed yielding fruit, without humane industry; but since the curse came upon it, it must be plowed and sowed, or no fruit can be expected. So man at first had all the principles of holiness in his nature, but now they must be infused by regeneration

ration, or else his nature is as void of holiness as the barren and untilled desart of Corn.

2. The earlier the Seed is sown, the better it is rooted and enabled to endure the asperities of the winter; so when grace is early infused, when nature is sanctified in the bud, grace is thereby exceedingly advantaged. 'Twas *Timothies* singular advantage, that he knew the Scriptures of a Child.

3. Frosts and snows conduce very much to the well rooting of the seed, and makes it spread and take root much the better. So do Sanctified afflictions, which usually the people of God meet with after their calling, and often in their very Seed-time, 1 *Thes.* 1. 6. *And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction.* But if they have fair weather then, to be sure they shall meet with weather hard enough afterwards, *Heb.* 10. 32. *But call to remembrance the former days, in which after ye were illuminated, ye indured a great fight of afflictions.*

4. When the Seed is cast into the earth, it must be covered up by the Harrow; the use whereof in Husbandry, is not not only to lay a plain floor (as they speak) but to open and let in the Corn to the bosome of the earth, and there cover it up for its security, from birds that would devour it. Thus doth the most wise God provide for the security of that grace, which he had first desseminated in the hearts of his people. He is as well the finisher as the author of their grcae, *Heb.* 12. 2. And of this they may be confident, that he that hath begun a good work in them, will perform it unto the day of Christ. The care of God over the graces of his people, is like the covering of the seed for security.

5. Seed-Corn is in its own nature, of much more value and worth than other Corn; the Husbandman casts in the principal wheat. So are the seeds of grace sown in the renewed soul; for it's called, *The seed of God*, 1 *John* 3. 9. *The Divine nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. One dram of grace is far beyound all the glory of this world; it's more precious than gold which perishes, 1 *Pet.* 1. 7. *The price of it is above rubies, and all that thou canst desire is not to be compared with it*, Prov. 3. 15.

There

There is a great deal of spirit and vigour in a little Seed, though it be small in bulk, yet it is great in vertue and efficacy. Gracious habits are also vigorous and efficacious things. Such is their efficacy that they overcome the world, 1 *John* 5. 4. *Whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world.* They totally alter and change the person in whom they are. *He that persecuted us in times past, now preacheth the Faith which once he destroyed.* They enable the soul to do and suffer great things for God, *Heb.* 11. 33, 34, 35. 6.

The stalk and ear are potentially and virtually in a small grain of Corn. So are all the fruits of obedience which believers afterwards bring forth to God, vertually contained in those habits of seeds of Grace. 'Tis strange to consider, that from a mustard-seed (which as Christ saith is the least of all seeds) should grow such great branches, that the birds of the Air may build their nests in them. Surely the heroical and famous acts and atchievements of the most renowned believers sprang from small beginnings at first, to that eminency and glory. 7.

The fruitfulness of the seed depends upon the Sun and rain, by which they are quickned, as is opened largely in the next Chapter. And the principles of grace in us have as necessary a dependance upon the assisting and exciting grace without us. For though it be true, they are immortal seeds; yet that is not so much from their own strength, as from the promises made to them, and that constant influx from above, by which they are revived and preserved from time to time. 8.

The seed is fruitful in some soils more than in others, prospers much better, and comes sooner to maturity. So doth grace thrive better, and grow faster in some persons than in others. *Your faith groweth exceedingly*, 2 Thes. 1. 3. *Whilst the things that are in others are ready to dye*, Rev. 32. Though no mans heart be naturally a kind soyl to grace, yet doubtless grace is more advantaged in some dispositions than in others. 9.

And lastly, their agreement as Seed appears in this, the Seed-corn is scattered into all parts of the field, as proportionably 10.

tionably and equally as may be. So is grace diffus'd into all the faculties, judgment, will, and all the affections are sowed with these new principles, *The God of Peace sanctifie you wholly*, 1 *Thes.* 5. 23.

And thus you see, why principles of grace are called Seed. Now in the next place, (which is the second thing promised and mainly designed in this Chapter) to shew you the choiceness and excellency of these holy principles with which sanctified souls are embellisht and adorned, and to convince you that true grace excels all other principles, by which other persons are acted, even as the principal wheat doth the chaff and refuse stuff. I shall here institute a comparison betwixt grace, and the most splendid common gifts in the world, and its transcendent excellency above them all will evidently appear in the seven following particulars.

1. The most excellent common gifts come out of the common treasury of Gods bounty, and that in a natural way, they are but the improvement of a mans natural abilities or (as one calls them) the sparks of nature blown up by the Wind of a more benign and liberal education; but principles of grace are of a divine and heavenly original and extraction not educed or raised from nature, but supernaturally infused by the Spirit from on high, *Joh.* 3. 6. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit*, When a soul is sanctified by them, *he partakes of the divine nature*, 2 Pet. 1. 4. *is born not of flesh, nor of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God*, *Joh.* 1. 13. In this respect they differ from gifts, as the heavenly Mannah which was rained down from heaven, differs from common bread, which by pains and industry the earth produces in a natural way.

2. The best natural gifts afford not that sweetness and solid comfort to the soul that grace doth; they are but a dry stalk that affords no meat for a soul to feed on. A man may have an understanding full of light, and an heart void of comfort at the same time; but grace is a fountain of purest living streams of peace and comfort, 1 *Pet.* 1. 8. *Believing we rejoyce with joy unspeakable and full of glory; light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart.* All true pleasures and

and delights are seminally in grace, *Psal.* 97. 11. they are sown for them in these divine and heavenly graces, which are glory in the bud.

Gifts adorn the person, but do not secure the soul from wrath. A man may be admired for them among men, and rejected eternally by God. Who can considerately read that sixth Chapter of the *Hebrews*, and not tremble to think in what a forlorn case a soul may be, though set off and accomplisht with the rarest endowments of this kind, *Mat.* 7. 22. We read, that many shall say to *Christ* in that day, *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name cast out Devils, &c.* and yet themselves at last cast out as a prey to Devils. How divinely and rhetorically did a *Balaam* speak and prophesie, *Num.* 23. What rare and excellent parts had the *Scribes* and *Pharisees?* who upon that account were stiled *principes seculi*, the Princes of the World, 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. What profound and excellent parts had the Heathen *Sages* and *Philosophers?* These things are so far from securing the soul against the wrath to come, that they often expose it unto wrath, and are as oyl to encrease the eternal burnings, but now gracious principles are the τὰ ἐχόμενα σωτηρίας, as the Apostle calls them, *Heb.* 6. Things that accompany and have salvation in them. These are the things on which the promises of salvation run; and these treasures are never found but in elect vessels. Glory is by promise assured and made over to him that possesses them. There is but a little point of time, betwixt him and the glorified spirits above. And how inconsiderable a matter is a little time, which contracts and winds up apace? For *now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.* And hence the scripture speaks of them as already saved, *Rom.* 8. 24. *We are saved by hope*, because its as sure as if we were in heaven. We are made to sit in heavenly places.

3. Like a precious stone in a Toads eye.

Gifts may damnifie the person that possesses them; and it may be better in respect of a mans own condition he had never had them. *Knowledge* (saith the Apostle) *Puffeth up*, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. maketh the soul proud and flatulent. 'Tis a hard thing to know much, and not to know it too much. The Saints

4.

knowledge is better than the Scholar; for he hath his own heart inſtead of a Commentary to help him. *Ariſtotle* ſaid a little knowledge about heavenly things, though conjectural is better than much of earthly things, though certain. *The world by wiſdom knew not God* (ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 1. 21) (*i. e.*) their learning hanged in their light, they were too wiſe to ſubmit to the ſimplicity of the Goſpel. The excellent parts of the old Hereticks, did but ſerve to midwife into the world the monſtrous birth of ſoul-damning hereſies. *Cupit abs te ornari diabolus*, as *Auſtin* ſaid to that ingenious young Scholar; the devil deſires to be adorned by thee. But now grace in it ſelf is not ſubject to ſuch abuſes, it cannot be the proper *univocal cauſe* of any evil effect: It cannot puff up the heart, but always humbles it; nor ſerve the devils deſigns, but ever oppoſes them.

4. Gifts may be given a man for the ſake of others, and not out of love to himſelf, they are but an excellent diſh of meat which a man ſends to a nurſe, not for her ſake ſo much as for his Child that ſucks her. God indeed makes uſe of them to do his Children good, the Church is benefitted by them, though themſelves are but like Cooks, they prepare excellent diſhes on which the Saints feed, and are nouriſhed, though themſelves taſte them not. They are *dona miniſtrantia non ſanctificantia*, miniſtring but not ſanctifying gifts, proceeding not from the good will of God to him that hath them, but to thoſe he benefits by them. And oh, what a ſad conſideration will this be one day to ſuch a perſon, to think, I helped ſuch a ſoul to heaven, while I my ſelf muſt lodge in hell?

5. Sin in the raign and power of it, may cohabit with the moſt excellent natural gifts under the ſame roof, I mean in the ſame heart. A man may have the tongue of an *Angel*, and the heart of a *Devil*. The wiſdom of the *Philoſophers* (ſaith *Lactantius*) *non excindit vitia ſed abſcondit*, did not root out, but hide their vices. The learned *Phariſees* were but painted Sepulchres; gifts are but as a fair glove drawn over a foul hand. But now grace is incompatible with ſin in dominion, it purifies the heart, Acts 15. 9. cleanſes the conſcience

science, *Heb.* 9. 14. Crucifies the affections and lusts of the flesh, *Gal.* 5. 24. is not content with the concealment, but ruine of corruptions.

Lastly, Gifts must leave us at last. *Whether there be knowledge, that shall cease. All flesh is grass and the goodliness of it as the flower of the grass; the grass withers, the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord abideth for ever*, Isa. 40. 6, 8. Many times they leave a man before death. One knock, if it hit right, (as one saith) may make a wise man a fool, but to be sure, they all leave us at death. *Doth not his excellency which is in him, go away? Job* 4. 21. yea, then all natural excellency departs. Death strips the soul of all those splendid ornamens, then the rhetorical tongue is struck dumb; the nimble wit and curious fancy, shall entertain your ears with no more pleasant discourses. *Nunquam jocos dabis*, as *Adrian* said to his departing soul; but grace ascends with the soul into eternity, and there receives its perfection and accomplishment. Gifts take their leave of the soul, as *Orpha* did of *Naomi*; but grace saith, then as *Ruth*, where thou goest I will go, *and where thou lodgest I will lodge, and nothing shall separate thee and me.* Now put all this together and then judge whether the Apostle spake hyperbolyes, when he said, *Covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet I shew unto you a more excellent way*, 1 *Cor.* 12. *ult.* And thus you have the choiceness of these principles also. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

The lines are fallen to me in a pleasant place, may the gracious soul say. How defective soever I am in gifts yet blessed be the Lord, who hath sown the seeds of true grace in my heart. What though I am not famed and honoured among men, let it suffice me that I am precious in the eyes of the Lord. Though he hath not abounded to me in gifts of nature, *yet blessed be the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ who hath abounded to me in all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus*, Eph. 1. 3. Is not a true jewel, though spurn'd in the dirt, more precious than a false one, though set

The gracious souls Reflection.

set in gold? why art thou troubled, O my soul, for the want of these things which reprobates may have? and art not rather admiring and blessing God for those things which none but the darlings and favourites of heaven can have? is not an ounce of pure gold more valuable than many pounds of guilded brass? What though the dews of *Helicon* descend not upon my *head*, if in the mean time the sweet influences of *Sion* fall upon my *heart*? O my God! how much soever others are elated by the light of their knowledge, I have cause with humility to adore thee for the heavenly heat with which thou hast warmed my affections.

The deceived souls Reflection.

Pause a while my soul upon this point. With what seed is my heart sown, or of what kind are those things wherein I excell others? are they indeed special seeds of grace, or common gifts and natural excellencies? If the latter, little cause have I to pride my self in them, were they ten thousand times more then they are. If these things be indeed the things that accompany salvation, the seed of God, the true and real work of grace, Then (1) how comes it to pass that I never found any throws or travelling pangs in the production of them? It's affirmed, and generally acknowledged that the new creature is never brought forth without such pains, and compunctions of heart, *Acts* 2. 37. I have indeed often felt an aking *head*, whilst I have read and studied to increase my knowledge; but when did I feel an aking *heart* for sin? Oh, I begin to suspect, that it is not right. Yea, (2) and my suspicion increases whiles I consider that grace is of an humbling nature, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. Lord, how have I been elated by my gifts and valued my self above what was meet? O how have I delighted in the noise of the *Pharisees* trumpet! *Mat.* 6. 2. No musick so sweet as that. Say, O my conscience, have I not delighted more in the Theatre, than the Closet? in the praise of men, than the approbation of God? Oh, how many evidences dost thou produce against me? Indeed these are sad symptoms that I have shewed thee, but there is yet another which renders thy case more suspitious yet, yea, that which thou canst make no rational defence against, even the ineffectualness of all thy

gifts

gifts and knowledg to mortifie any one of all thy lusts. It's beyond all dispute, that gifts may, but grace cannot consist without mortification of sin, *Gal.* 5. 24. Now what lust hath fallen before these excellent parts of mine? Doth not pride, passion, covetousness, and indeed the whole body of sin live and thrive in me as much as ever? Lord, I yield the cause, I can defend it no longer against my conscience, which casts and condemns me by full proof, to be but in a wretched, cursed lamentable state, notwithstanding all my knowledg and flourishing gifts. O shew me a more excellent way Lord! that I had the sincerity of the poorest Saint; though I should lose the applause of all my parts: with these I see I may go to hell, but without some better thing, no hope of heaven.

The *Poem.*

GReat difference betwixt that seed is found,
With which you sow your several plots of ground.
Seed-wheat doth so far excell in (1) dignity,
The cheaper Barley, and the courser Rye.
Though in themselves they good and wholsom are;
Yet these with choicest wheat may not compare,
Mens hearts like fields are sowed with different grain;
Some baser, some more noble; some again
Excelling (2) both the former: more than wheat
Excells that grain, your swine, and horses eat.
For principles of meer morality,
Like Cummin, Barley, Fitches, Pease, or Rye:
In those mens hearts are often to be found.
Whom yet the Scripture calleth (3) cursed ground.
And nobler principles than these sometime
Cal'd (4) common grace, and spiritual gifts which shine.
In some mens heads, where is their habitation;
Yet they are no companions of Salvation.
These purchase (5) honour both from great and small;
But I must tell thee that if this be all; Though

(1) Isa. 28. 25.
(2) Prov. 12. 26.
(3) Mat. 13. 20.
(4) Heb. 6. 9.
(5) 1 Cor. 1. 26.

(6) 1 Cor. 13. 1 Though like an (6) Angel in theſe gifts thou ſhine,
Amongſt blind mortals, for a little time:
The day's at hand, when ſuch as thou muſt take
(7) Mat. 7. 22. Thy lot with (7) devils in th'infernal lake.
But principles of ſpecial ſaving grace,
(8) Rom. 10. 10 Whoſe ſeat is in the (8) heart, not head or face:
Like ſolid wheat, ſown in a fruitful field
Shall ſpring and flouriſh, and at laſt will yield
(9) Gal. 6. 8. A glorious (9) harveſt of eternal reſt,
To him that nouriſh'd them within his breaſt.
O grace! how orient art thou! how divine!
(1) 1 Cor. 12. 13. What is the glory of all (1) gifts to thine!
Diſſeminate this ſeed within my heart,
Ey God I pray thee, though thou ſhouldſt impart
The leſs of gifts; then I may truly ſay,
That thou haſt ſhew'd me the more excellent way.

CHAP. IX.

Upon ſpringing weather after ſeed time

By heavens influence, Corn and plants do ſpring,
Gods ſhowers of grace do make his valleys ſing.

OBSERVATION.

THE earth after that it is plow'd and ſow'd, muſt be watered and warm'd with the dews and influences of heaven, or no fruit can be expected. If God do not open to you his good treaſure, the heavens to give rain unto the Land in its ſeaſon, and bleſs all the work of your hands, as it is, *Deut.* 28. 12. The earth cannot yield her increaſe. The order and dependance of natural cauſes in the productions of fruit, is excellently deſcribed, *Hoſ.* 2. 21, 22. *I will hear the heavens, and they ſhall hear the earth; and the earth ſhall hear the corn, and wine, and Oyl, and they ſhall hear* Jezreel. *Jezreel* muſt

muſt have corn, and wine, and oyl, or they cannot live; they cannot have it unleſs the earth bring it forth, the earth cannot bring it forth without the heavens, the heavens cannot yield a drop unleſs God hear them; that is, unlock and open them. * Nature and natural cauſes are nothing elſe but the order in which God works. This ſome *Heathens* by the light of nature acknowledged, and therefore when they went to plow in the morning, they did lay one hand upon the plow (to ſpeak their own part to be painfulneſs) and hold up the other hand to *Ceres* the God of the Corn, to ſhew, that their expectation of plenty was from their ſuppoſed Deity. I fear many *Chriſtians* lay both hands to the plow, and ſeldom lift up heart or hand to God, when about that work. There was an Husbandman (ſaith Mr. *Smith*) that alwayes ſowed good ſeed, but never had good corn; at laſt a neighbour came to him, and ſaid, I will tell you what probably may be the cauſe of it? It may be (ſaid he) you do not ſteep your Seed; no truly ſaid the other, nor never did I hear that Seed muſt be ſteeped; yes ſurely, ſaid his neighbour, and I will tell you how, it muſt be ſteeped in prayer. When the party heard this, he thanked him for his counſel, reformed his fault, and had as good Corn as any man whatſoever. Surely it is not the Husbandmans, but Gods ſteps that drop fatneſs. *Alma mater terra*, the earth indeed is a fruitful Mother, but the rain which fecundates and fertilizes it, hath no other father but God, *Job* 38. 28.

* *Natura nihil aliud eſt quam divinorum operum ordo.* Brentius.

Weems Cerem. Law.

Smiths Eſſex Dove.

APPLICATION.

AS impoſſible it is (in an ordinary way) for ſouls to be made fruitful in grace and holineſs, without the dews and influences of Ordinances and the bleſſing of God upon them, as for the earth to yield her fruits without the natural influences of heaven; for look, what dews, ſhowers, and cleer ſhinings after rain are to the fields, that the word and Ordinances of God are to the ſouls of men. *My doctrine ſhall drop as the rain, my ſpeech ſhall diſtill as the dew, as the ſmall rain upon the tender herb, and as the ſhowers upon the graſs,* Deut.

Deut. 32.2. *For as the rain and ſnow cometh down from heaven and watreth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud; ſo ſhall my word be that goeth forth of my mouth*, Iſa. 55. 10, 11. And as the Doctrine of the Goſpel is rain, ſo Goſpel Miniſters are the Clouds in which thoſe heavenly vapours are bound up. The reſemblance lies in the following particulars.

1. The rain comes from heaven, *Acts* 14. 17. *He gave us rain from heaven and fruitful ſeaſons*, &c. The Doctrine of the Goſpel is alſo of an heavenly extraction and deſcent, they are heavenly truths which are brought to you in earthen veſſels, things that were hid in God, and come from his boſom, *Eph.* 3.9. What *Nicodemus* ſaid of *Chriſt*, is in a proportion true of every faithful diſpenſer of the Goſpel, *Thou art a Teacher come from God*, John 3.2. You are not to look upon the truths which Miniſters deliver, as the meer effects and fruits of their inventions and parts, they are but the Conduits through which thoſe cœleſtial waters are conveyed to you. 'Tis all heavenly, the *Officers* from heaven, *Eph.* 4.12. Their *Doctrine* from heaven, *Eph.* 3. 8, 9. The *efficacy* and *ſucceſs* of it from heaven, 1 *Cor.* 3.3. *What I received of the Lord* (ſaith *Paul*) *that have I delivered unto you*, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. The ſame may every Goſpel Miniſter ſay too. That's the firſt,

2. And then (2*ly*) The rain falls by divine direction and appointment; *He cauſes it to rain upon one City and not upon another*, Amos 4.7. You ſhall often ſee a Cloud diſſolve and ſpend it ſelf upon one place, when there is not a drop within a few miles of it. Thus is the Goſpel ſent to ſhed its rich influences upon one place, and not upon another; It pours down ſhowers of bleſſings upon one Town or Pariſh, whilſt others are dry like the ground which lay near to *Gideonss* wet fleece. *To you is the word of this ſalvation ſent*, Act 13.26. *Sent*, it comes not by *chance*, but by *Commiſſion* and appointment, and its ſent *to you* by ſpecial direction. Miniſters can no more go whither they pleaſe, than the ſailing Clouds can move againſt the wind. *Paul* and *Timothy*, two fruitful Clouds (that ſent down many ſweet refreſhing ſhowers upon every

place

place whither they came) the Lord ſent them through *Phrygia* and *Galatia* but forbad them to preach the word in *Aſia*, *Acts* 16. 6. *And when they aſſayed to go into* Bithynia, *the ſpirit ſuffered them not*, v. 7. *But a man of Macedonia appears to Paul in a viſion, and prayed him, ſaying, come over to Macedonia and help us*, v9.. Thus you ſee, how the *myſtical*, as well as the *natural* Clouds, are moved according to divine counſel; and though Miniſters are not now diſpoſed to their reſpective places, in ſuch an extraordinary way, yet there is ſtill a ſpecial hand of the ſpirit guiding their motions, which is ſeen partly in qualifying them or ſuch a people, and partly in drawing out their hearts to elect and call them, and inclining their hearts to accept the call.

3. There is a great deal of difference in the ſhowers of rain that fall upon the earth. Sometimes you have an haſty ſhower, which makes the ways fleet, and the ſtreets run, but it's gone preſently, the earth hath but little benefit by it; and ſometimes you have a ſweet, gentle, ſoaking rain, that moderately ſoaks to the root and refreſhes the earth abundantly. This is called *the ſmall rain*, and the former, *the great rain of his ſtrength*, *Job* 37.6. So it is in theſe ſpiritual ſhowers, the effects of ſome ſermons, (like a ſudden ſpout of rain) are very tranſient; that touch the heart a little for the preſent by way of conviction or comfort, but it fleets away immediately, *Jam.* 1.23. At other times the Goſpel like a ſetled moderate rain, ſoaks to the root, to the very heart. So did that ſweet ſhower which fell, *Acts* 2. 37. It ſearcheth the root, it went to the heart; the influences of it are ſometimes abiding, and do much longer remain in, and refreſh the heart, than the rain doth the earth. There be effects left in ſome hearts, by ſome Sermons and duties, that will never out of it ſo long as they live. *I will never forget thy precepts, for by them thou haſt quickned me*, *Pſal.* 119. 92.

4. The rain is moſt beneficial to the earth, when there come ſweet, warm Sun-blaſts with it, or after it. This the Scripture calls, *a clear ſhining after rain*, 2 *Sam.* 23. 4. by which the *ſeminal vertue* of the earth is drawn forth, and then the herbs and flowers, and Corn ſprout abundantly. So it is with

Goſpel ſhowers, when the Sun of Rightouſneſs opens upon poor ſouls under the word, darting down the beams of grace and love upon them, whilſt they are attending on it, (juſt as you ſometimes ſee a ſweet ſhower fall while the Sun ſhines out) O how comfortable is this! and effectual to melt the heart! and as the warm rain is moſt refreſhing, ſo when the word comes warmly from the melting affections of the Preacher, who imparts not only the Goſpel, but his own ſoul with it, 1 *Theſ.* 2.8. This doth abundantly more good than that which drops coldly from the lips of the unaffected ſpeaker.

5. Showers of rain do exceedingly refreſh the earth, as a man is refreſhed by a draught of water, when his ſpirits are even ſpent. O how welcome is a ſhower to a thirſty ground! Hence the little hills are ſaid to rejoyce on every ſide, yea to ſhout for joy, and ſing when a ſhower comes, *Pſal.* 65. 12, 13. but never was ſhower of rain ſo ſweetly refreſhing to the thirſty earth, as Goſpel-ſhowers are to gracious hearts, *Col.* 4. 8. It it comforts their very hearts. What joy was there in *Samaria*, when the Goſpel came to that place? *Acts* 8. 8. It revives the ſoul, its *mel in ore*, *melos in aure*, *jubilæum in corde*, honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, and a very Jubilee in the heart.

6. Rain is neceſſary at Seed-time, to make ready the earth, to receive the Seed, *Pſal.* 65. 9, 13. *Thou viſiteſt the earth, and watereſt it; thou greatly inricheſt it with the river of God, which is full of water; thou prepareſt them corn, when thou haſt ſo provided for it; thou watereſt the ridges thereof abundantly, thou ſetteſt the furrows thereof, thou makeſt it ſoft with ſhowers, thou bleſſeſt the ſpringing thereof.* And this the Scripture calls the former rain. And as this is neceſſary about Seed time, ſo the latter rain is as needful about earing time, to diſcloſe the ear, and to bring it to perfection; both theſe are great bleſſings to the earth, and conduce to a plentiful harveſt, *Joel* 2. 23, 24. *Be glad then ye children of Sion, and rejoyce in the Lord your God, for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cauſe to come down for you the rain, the former and the latter rain in the firſt month, and the floors ſhall be full of wheat*

wheat, and the faces shall overflow with wine and Oyl. Thus the Gospel hath a double use and benefit also. It's necessary as the former rain at Seed time, it causes the first spring of grace in the heart, *Psal.* 19. 7. And there could be, (in an ordinary way) no spring of grace without it, *Prov.* 29 18. And as this former rain is necessary to cause the first spring of grace, so also it hath the use of the latter rain to ripen those precious fruits of the spirit in the souls of Believers, *Eph.* 4. 11, 12, 13. *He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Were all the elect* converted unto God, and still there would be a necessity of a Gospel Ministry.

7. After a great glut of rain, usually there comes a drought; 'tis a common Countrey Proverb *Wet and dry pay one another.* And truly when a people are glutted with a fulness of Gospel mercies, it's usual with God to shut up and restrain the Gospel clouds, that for a time (at least) there be no dews upon them, and therefore teach them to prize their despised (because common) mercies at an higher rate. For as a good man once said, mercies are best known by the back, and most prized when most wanted. *In those days the word of the Lord was precious, there was no open vision,* 1 *Sam.* 3. 1. It is with spiritual as with temporal food, slighted when plenteous, but if a famine once come, then every bit of bread is precious. *Jerusalem* remembred in the days of her affliction, and of her misery, all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, *Lam.* 1. 7. 'Tis both a sinful and dangerous thing to wantonize with Gospel Mercies, and despise the plainest (if faithful) Ministers of the Gospel. The time may come when you may be glad of the plainest Sermon, from the mouth of the meanest Embassador of Christ.

8. To conclude, the prayers of Saints are the keys that open and shut the natural clouds, and cause them either to give out,

out, or with-hold their influences, *Jam.* 5. 18. *Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six moneths; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth fruit.* God hath subjected the works of his hands, to the prayers of his Saints, *Isa.* 45. 11.

Prayer is also the golden key which opens these mystical Gospel-Clouds, and dissolves them into sweet gracious showers. God will have the whole work of the Ministry carried on by the prayers of his people, they first obtain their Ministers by prayer, *Luke* 10. 2. *Pray ye the Lord of the Harvest to send forth labourers into the vineyard.* It is by the help of prayer, that they are carried on, and enabled to exercise their Ministry. They may tell their people as a great General once told his Souldiers. *That he flew upon their wings. Pray for me* (saith the great Apostle) *that utterance may be given me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the Mysteries of the Gospel*, Eph, 6. 19. Yea, by the Saints prayers it is, that Ministers obtain the success and fruits of their labours, *Thes.* 3. 1. *Finally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you.* And thus you have the Metaphor opened. Now, Oh! that these truths might come down in sweet showers upon the hearts both of Ministers and people, in the following Reflections.

REFLECTIONS.

3. Reflections for Gospel Ministers. 1.

Am I then a cloud? and is my doctrine as rain to water the Lord inheritance? and yet do I think it much to be tossed up and down by the furious winds and storms of persecution? do I not see the clouds above me in continual motions and agitations? and shall I dream of a fixed settled State? No false Teachers, who are clouds without rain, are more likely to enjoy that, than I. Which of all the Prophets have not been tossed and hurried worse than I? *Acts* 7. 52. He that will not let men alone to be quiet in their Lusts, must ex-

expect but little quiet from men in this life. But it is enough Lord that a reſt remaineth for thy ſervant, let me be ſo wiſe as to ſecure a reſt to come, and not ſo vain to expect it on earth.

2. And, O that I might ſtudy thoſe inſtructing clouds, from which, as from the bottles of heaven, God pours down refreſhing ſhowers to quench and ſatisfie the thirſty earth! in this may I reſemble them, and come among the people of the Lord, *in the fulneſs of the bleſſing of the Goſpel of Chriſt*, *Rom.* 15.29. O let not thoſe thirſty ſouls that wait for me as for the rain, *Job* 29. 23. *Return like the Troops of* Tema, *aſhamed with their heads covered*, Job. 6. 19. O that my lips might refreſh many! let me never be like thoſe empty clouds, which deceive the hopes of thirſty ſouls; but let my Doctrine deſcend as the rain and diſtil as the dew, and let that plot of thine inheritance which thou haſt aſſigned to me, be as the field which the Lord hath bleſſed.

3. Once more, lift up thine eyes to the Clouds, and behold, to how great an hight the Sun hath mounted them, for by reaſon of their ſublimity it is that they are called the Clouds of Heaven, *Mat.* 24.30. Lord, let me be a Cloud of Heaven too! Let my heart and converſation be both there! who is more advantaged for an heavenly life than I? heavenly truths are the ſubjects of my daily ſtudy, and ſhall earthly things be the objects of my daily delights and loves? God forbid, that ever my earthly converſation ſhould contradict and ſhame my heavenly calling and profeſſion. Shine forth thou glorious Sun of righteouſneſs, and my heart ſhall quickly be attracted and mounted above theſe viſible Clouds, yea, and above the aſpectable heavens.

3. Reflections for private Chriſtians.

1. For thoſe that want a Goſpel Miniſtry.

Is the Goſpel rain, and its Miniſters Clouds? Wo is me then, that my habitation is upon the Mountains of *Gilboa*, where there are no dews! Ah ſad lot, that I ſhould be like *Gideons* dry fleece, whilſt the ground round about me is wet with the dew of heaven! O thou that commandeſt the Clouds above, and openeſt the windows of Heaven; remember, and refreſh this parched wilderneſs, wherein I live, with ſhowers of grace, that we may not be as the heath in the deſart;

deſart, which ſeeth not when good cometh, nor inhabit the parched places of the wilderneſs.

2. For thoſe that enjoy a Goſpel Miniſtry.

O Lord, thou haſt cauſed the heavens above me to be black with clouds, thou openeſt the cœleſtial caſements from above, and daily ſendeſt down ſhowers of Goſpel-bleſſings; O that I might be as the parched earth under them! not for barrenneſs, but for thirſtineſs. Let me ſay, *My ſoul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the Courts of the Lord:* that I might there ſee the beauty of the Lord. Doth the ſpungy earth ſo greedily ſuck up the ſhowers, and open as many mouths as there are clefts in it, to receive what the clouds diſpenſe? and ſhall thoſe precious ſoul-inriching ſhowers fleet away unprofitably for me? if ſo, then,

3. For unprofitable hearers.

What an account have I to make for all thoſe Goſpel-bleſſings that I have enjoyed? For all thoſe Goſpel-dews and ſhowers wherewith I have been watred! Should I be found fruitleſs at laſt, it will fare better with the barren and uncultivated wilderneſs, than with me, more tolerable for *Indians* and *Barbarians*, that ner heard the Goſpel, than for me that have been ſo aſſiduouſly and plentifully watred by it. Lord, what a difference wilt thou put in the great day, betwixt ſimple and pertinacious barrenneſs! Surely, if my root be not rottenneſs, ſuch heavenly watrings and influences as theſe, will make it ſprout forth into fruits of Obedience.

The *Poem.*

(1) Iſa. 44. 14. (2) Deu. 28. 12.

THe (1) vegetables here below depend,
Upon thoſe (2) treaſures which the heavens do ſpend
Moſt bounteouſly upon them: to preſerve
Their being, and their beauty. This may ſerve
To ſhadow forth a heavenly Myſtery,
Which thus preſents it ſelf before your eye.

As when the Sun draws near us in the ſpring,
All creatures do (3) rejoyce, birds chirp and ſing.
The face of nature ſmiles, the fields (4) adorn
Themſelves, with rich embroideries. The corn
Revives, and ſhooteth up, the warm ſweet rain
Makes trees, and herbs (5) ſprout forth and ſpring amain,
Walk but the fields in ſuch a fragrant morn,
How do the (6) birds your ears with muſick charm?
The (7) flowers, their flaming beauty's do preſent
Unto your captiv'd eyes: and for their ſcent,
The ſweet *Arabian* Gums cannot compare;
Which thus perfume the circumambient air.
So, when the Goſpel ſheds its cheering beams,
On gracious ſouls; like thoſe ſweet warming gleams,
Which God ordains in nature; to draw forth
The vertue ſeminal that's in the earth:
It warms their (8) hearts, their languid ſpirits cheers;
And on ſuch ſouls, a (9) ſpring-like face appears.
The gracious ſhowers theſe ſpiritual clouds do yield,
Inriches them with (1) ſweetneſs; like a field
Which God hath bleſt. Oh! 'tis exceeding ſweet,
When gracious hearts, and (2) heavenly truths do meet.
How ſhould the hearts of Saints within them ſpring,
When they behold (3) the meſſengers that bring
Theſe gladſom tydings? yea, their very feet
Are beautiful; becauſe their meſſage ſweet.
O what a mercy do thoſe (4) Souls enjoy
On whom ſuch Goſpel dews fall day by day!
Thrice happy Land which in this pleaſant ſpring,
Can hear theſe Turtles, in her hedges ſing.
O prize ſuch mercies, if you ask me why?
Read on, you'l ſee, there's reaſon by and by.

(3) Cant. 2. 11. 12.
(4) Pſal. 104. 30.
(5) Pſal. 65. 11.
(6) Pſal. 10. 4. 12.
(7) Cant. 4. 8. 12.
(8) Col. 4. 8.
(9) Pſal. 32. 8.
(1) Rom. 15. 29.
(2) Rom. 10. 15.
(3) Acts 8. 8.
(4) Pſal. 147. 19, 20.

CHAP. X.

Upon a dearth through want of rain.

If God restrain the showers, you howl and cry;
Shall Saints not mourn, when spiritual clouds are dry?

OBSERVATION.

'TIs deservedly accounted a sad judgment, when God shuts up the heavens over our heads, and makes the earth as brass under our feet, *Deut.* 28.23. Then the Husbandmen are called to mourning, *Joel* 1.11. All the fields do languish, and the bellowing cattle are pined with thirst. Such a sad state the Prophet rhetorically describes, *Jer.* 14. 3, 4, 5, 6. *The Nobles have sent their little ones to the waters, they came to the pits and found no water; they returned with their vessels empty, they were ashamed and confounded, and covered their head; because the ground is chapt, for there is no rain in the earth, the Plowmen were ashamed, they covered their heads: yea, the Hind also calved in the field and forsook it, because there was no grass: and the wild asses did stand in the high places, they snuffed up the wind like dragons, their eyes failed because there was no grass.*

And that wich makes the want of rain so terrible a judgement, is the famine of bread, which necessarily follows these extraordinary droughts and is one of the soreſt temporal judgements which God inflicts upon the world.

APPLICATION.

AND truly, as much cause have they to weep and tremble, over whose souls God shuts up the spiritual clouds of the Gospel, and thereby sending a spiritual famine upon their souls. Such a judgment the Lord threatens in *Amos* 8.11. *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will send a famine in the Land; not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but*

but of hearing the word of the Lord. The meaning is, I will send a more fearful judgment, than that of the famine of bread; for this particle [not] is not *exclusive*, but *excessive*; implying, that a famine of bread is nothing, or but a light judgment, compared with the famine of the word. Parallel to which is that Text, *Isa.* 5. 6. *I will lay it waste* (saith God of the fruitless Church) *it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up bryars and thorns; I will also command the clouds, that they rain not upon it.* And we find both in humane and spiritual Histories, that when God hath shut up the spiritual clouds, removing or silencing his ministers; sensible Christians have ever been deeply affected with it and reckoned it a most tremendous judgment. Thus the Christians of *Antioch*, when *Chrysostom* their Minister was banished * They judged it better to lose the Sun out of the firmament than lose that, their Minister. And when *Nazianzen* was taking his leave of *Constantinople*, as he was preaching his farewell-Sermon, the people were exceedingly affected with his loss; and among the rest, an old man in the Congregation fell into a bitter passion, and cryed out, *Aude pater, & tecum trinitatem ipsam ejice.* (*i. e.*) Go farther, if you dare, and take away the whole Trinity with you, meaning, that God would not stay when he was gone. How did the Christians of *Antioch* also weep and lament, when *Paul* was taking his farewell of them? *Acts* 20. 37, 38. He had been a cloud of blessings to that place, but now they must expect no more showers from him. O, they knew not how to give up such a Minister! when the Ark of God (which was the Symbole of the divine presence among the Jews) was taken, *all the City cryed out*, 1 *Sam.* 4. 13. O, the loss of a Gospel Ministry is an inestimable loss! not to be repaired but by its own return, or by heaven. Mr. *Greenham* tells us, that in the times of Popish persecution, when godly Ministers were haled away from their flocks to Martyrdom, the poor Christians would meet them in the way to the Prisons or stake, with their little ones in their arms, and throwing themselves at their feet, would thus bespeak them: "What "shall be our estate, now you are gone to Martyrdom? who

* *Satius est ut sol non luceat, quam ut non doceat* Chrysostomus.

"shall instruct these poor Babes? who shall ease our afflicted consciences? Who shall lead us in the way of life? "recompence unto them, O Lord! as they have deserved, "who are the causes of this, Lord give them sad hearts. *Quis talia fando, temperet a lachrymis?* And to let you see, there is sufficient ground for this sorrow, when God restrains the influences of the Gospel, solemnly consider the following particulars.

1. That it is a dreadful token of God's great anger against that people from whom he removes the Gospel. The anger of God was fearfully encreased against the Church of *Ephesus*, when he did but threaten to come against her and remove the Candlestick out of its place, *Rev.* 2. 5. 'Tis a stroke at the soul, a blow at the root; usually the last, and therefore the worst of judgments. There is a pedigree of judgments, first *Gomer* bears *Jezreel*, next *Loruhamah*, and at last brings forth *Loammi*, *Hos.* 1. 4, 6, 8, 9.

2. There is cause of mourning, if you consider the deplorable estate in which all the unregenerate souls are left, after the Gospel is removed from them. What will become of these? or by whom shall they be gathered? It made the bowels of Christ yearn within him, when he looked upon the scattered multitude that had no Shepherd, *Mat.* 9. 36. What an easie conquest doth the devil now make of them? how fast doth hell fill in such times? poor souls, being driven thither in droves, and none to rescue them! *Matthew Paris* tells us, that in the year 1072. when preaching was suppressed at *Rome*, letters were then framed as coming from hell; wherein the devil gave them thanks for the multitude of souls they had sent to him that year. But truly we need not talk of letters from hell, we are told from heaven, how deplorable the condition of such poor souls is. See *Prov.* 28. 19. *Hos.* 4. 6. Or,

3. The judgment will yet appear very heavy, if you consider the loss which God's own people sustain by the removal of the Gospel; for therein they lose (1) their chief glory, *Rom.* 3. 2. the principal thing in which the peculiar glory of *Israel* consisted was this, *That unto them was committed the Oracles*

Oracles of God. On that account it was called the glorious Land, *Dan.* 11. 16. This made them greater than all the Nations round about them. *Deut.* 4. 7, 8. (2) By losing the Ordinances, they lose their quicknings, comforts, and soul-refreshments; for all these are sweet streams from the Gospel fountain, *Psal.* 119. 50. Col. 4. 8. No wonder then to hear the People of God complain of dead hearts, when the Gospel is removed. (3) In the loss of the Gospel they lose their defence and safety. This is their hedge, their wall of protection. *Isa.* 5. 5. Walls and hedges (saith *Musculus in loc.*) are the Ordinances of God, which serve both *ad separationem & munitionem*, to distinguish, and to defend them. When God plucks up this hedge, and breaks down this wall all mischiefs break in upon us presently. 2 *Chron.* 15. 3, 4, 5, 6. *Now for a long season* Israel *hath been without the true God, and without a teaching Priest, and without Law – And in those times there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the Countries, and Nation was destroyed of Nation, and City of City; for God did vex them with all adversity.* How long did *Jerusalem* remain, after that voice was heard in the Temple, *migremus hinc?* Let us be gone. (4) With the Gospel, we lose our temporal enjoyments and creature-comforts. These usually come and go with the Gospel. When God had once written *Loammi* upon *Israel*, the next news is this, *I will recover my wool and my flax*, *Hos.* 2. 9. (5) and lastly, to come up to the very case in hand, they lose with it their spiritual food, and soul-subsistence; for the Gospel is their *feast of fat things*; *Isa.* 25. 6. their spiritual wells, *Isa.* 12. 3. a dole distributed among the Lords poor. *Rom.* 1. 11. in a word, it is as the rain and dews of heaven, as hath been shewed, which being restrained, a spiritual famine necessarily follows: a famine of all the most terrible. Now to shew you the analogy betwixt this and and a temporal famine, that therein you may see what cause you have to be deeply affected with it, take it in these six following particulars.

A famine is caused by the failing of bread, or that which is in the stead, and hath the use of bread. Dainties and superfluous

fluous rarities may fail, and yet men may ſubſiſt comfortably. As long as people have bread and water, they will not famiſh; but take away bread once, and the ſpirit of man faileth: Upon this account bread is called a ſtaff, *Pſal.* 105. 16. becauſe what a ſtaff is to an aged or feeble man, that bread is to the faint and feeble ſpirits, which even ſo do lean upon it. And look what bread is to the natural Spirits, that, and more than that, the word is to gracious Spirits, *Job* 23. 12. *I have eſteemed the words of thy mouth, more than my neceſſary food.* If once God break this ſtaff, the inner man, that hidden man of the heart, will quickly begin to fail and faulter.

2. It is not every degree of ſcarcity of bread, that preſently makes a famine, but a general failing of it; when no bread is to be had, or that which is, yields no nutriment. For a famine may as well be occaſioned by Gods taking away, *panis nutrimentum*, the nouriſhing vertue of bread, that it ſhall ſignifie no more as to the end of bread, than a chip, *Hag.* 1. 6. as by taking away *panem nutrientem*, bread it ſelf, *Iſa.* 3. 1. And ſo it is in a ſpiritual famine, which is occaſioned either by Gods removing all the Ordinances, and making proviſion utterly to fail; or elſe, though there be preaching, prayer and other Ordinances left, (at leaſt, the names and ſhadows of them) yet the preſence of God is not with them. There is no marrow in the bone, no milk in the breaſt; and ſo, as to ſoul-ſubſiſtence, 'tis all one, as if there were no ſuch things.

3. In a corporeal famine, mean and courſe things become ſweet and pleaſant; famine raiſes the price and eſteem of them. That which before you would have thrown to your dogs, now goes down pleaſantly with your ſelves. To the hungry ſoul every bitter thing is ſweet, *Prov.* 27. 7. 'Tis the Dutch Proverb, and a very true one, hunger is the beſt Cook.

Jejunus ſtomachus raro vulgaria temnit. Horat.
In time of famine courſeſt fare contents,
The barking ſtomach ſtrains no complements.

'Tis

'Tis ſtoried of *Artaxerxes Memor*, that when he was flying before his enemies, he fed hungrily upon barly bread, and ſaid, *Cujuſmodi voluptatis hactenus inexpertus fui?* O what pleaſure have I hitherto been ignorant of; when great *Darius* drank the pudled water, that had been defiled with dead carkaſes which had been ſlain in that famous battle, he profeſſed he never drank more pleaſant drink. And famous *Hunniades* ſaid, he never fared more daintily, than when (in a like exigence) he ſupped upon bread, onions, and water, with a poor Shepherd in his Cottage.

Juſt ſo doth the famine of the Word raiſe the price and eſteem of vulgar and deſpiſed truth. O what would we give for one of thoſe Sermons, one of thoſe Sabbaths we formerly enjoyed? *In thoſe days the word of the Lord was precious.* When God calls to the enemies to take away and remove his contemned, but precious dainties, from his wanton Children, and a ſpiritual famine hath a little pinched them, they will then learn to prize their ſpiritual food at a higher rate.

In time of famine ſome perſons ſuffer more than others. It falls heavieſt and pincheth hardeſt upon the poorer ſort, as long as any thing is to be had for money, the rich will have it. So it falls out in a Spiritual famine; although the moſt experienced, and beſt furniſhed Chriſtians, will have enough to do to live in the abſence of ordinances, yet they are like to ſubſiſt much better, than weak, ignorant, and unexperienced ones. Some Chriſtians have Husbanded their time well, and like *Joſeph* in the ſeven years *pleaty*, laid up for a *ſcarcity*. The word of God dwels richly in them. Some ſuch there are, as *John* calls young men, who are ſtrong, and the word of God remaineth in them, of whom it may be ſaid, as *Jerom* ſpake of *Nepotianus*, that by long and aſſiduous meditation of the Scriptures, he had made his breaſt the very Library of Chriſt. But others are but babes in Chriſt; and though God will preſerve that good work which he hath begun in the myet theſe poor babes will ſooneſt find, and be moſt concerned in the loſs of their ſpiritual Fathers and Nurſes.

In

5. In time of famine there are pitiful cryes, and heart-breaking complaints where-ever you go. O the many pale faces you ſhall then ſee, and the ſad language that rings in your ears in every place! one cries, bread, bread; for Chriſt's ſake, one bit of bread; another faints and falls down at your door. *All her people ſigh*, Lam. 1. 11. Yea the poor little ones are brought in, *v.* 12. crying to their Mothers, where is the Corn and Wine? and then pouring out their ſouls into their Mothers boſome. Juſt ſo it is in a famine of the Word; poor Chriſtians every where ſighing and crying, O where are our godly Miniſters? Our ſweet Sabbaths, Sermons, Sacraments, my Fathers, my Fathers, the Chariots of *Iſrael* and the horſemen thereof? How beautiful were your feet upon the mountains! And then weeping like the people at *Pauls* departure, to think they ſhall ſee their faces no more.

6. Laſtly, in time of famine, there is nothing ſo coſtly or precious, but people will part with it to purchaſe bread. *They have given their pleaſant things, for meat to relieve their ſouls*, *Lam.* 1. 11. And doubtleſs when a ſpiritual famine ſhall pinch hard, thoſe that have been cloſe-handed to maintain a Goſpel Miniſtry, will account it a choice mercy to enjoy them again at any rate. *Though the Lord feed you with the bread of affliction, and give you the waters of adverſity, yet it will ſweeten that bread and water to you, if your teachers be no more removed into corners*, Iſa. 30. 20.

The ungrateful ſouls Reflection.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Is the famine of the word ſuch a fearful judgment? the Lord pardon my unthankfulneſs, for the plentiful and long continued enjoyment of ſuch a precious and invaluable mercy. How lightly have I eſteemed the great things of the Goſpel? O that with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, I might bleſs the Lord, that ever I was brought forth in an age of ſo much light! in a valley of viſions, in a Land flowing with Goſpel-mercies. *Hath not God made of one blood, all the Nations of men, to dwell on the face of the earth? and determined*

mined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation? Acts 17. 26. Many of these great and populous Nations are involved in gross darkness. Now that of all the several ages of the world, and places in it; God should espy the best place for me, and bring me forth into it, in such an happy nick of time, as can hardly be parallel'd in History, for the plenty of Gospel-mercies, that this age and Nation hath enjoyed; that my mother did not bring me forth in the desarts of *Arabia*, or wasts of *America*, but in *England* where God hath made the Sun of the Gospel to stand still, as the natural Sun once did over *Gibeon*; and that such a mercy should no more affect my soul, let shame cover my face for this, and trembling seize my heart.

2. The deprived Christians reflection.

Is the Gospel indeed departed? its sweet influences restrained? and a famine worse than that of bread come upon us. *Alas! for the day, for it is a great day, so that none is like it; it is even the day of* Jacob's *trouble.* Wo is me, that ever I should survive the Gospel, and the precious liberties and mercies of it! What horrid sins have been harboured amongst us, for which the Lord contends, by such an unparallel'd judgment? Lord, let me justifie thee even in this severe dispensation; the provocation of thy Sons, and of thy daughters have been very great, and amongst them none greater than mine. May we not this day read our sin in our punishment? O what nice and wanton appetites, what curious and itching ears had thy people in the days of plenty? Methods, tones and gestures, were more regarded than the excellent treasures of divine truths. Ah my soul! I remember my fault this day? little did I then consider, that Sermons work not upon hearts, as they are thus elegant, thus admirable, but as they are instruments in the hand of God appointed to such an end. Even as *Austin* said of the Conduits of water, though one be in the shape of an Angel, another of a beast, yet the water refreshes as it is water, and not as it comes from such a Conduit: by this also, O Lord, thou rebukest the supineness and formality of thy people. How drowsie, dull, and careless have they been under the most excellent and quickning means? few more then I. Alas! I have often presented my

body before the Lord in Ordinances, ἡ ψυχὴ ἐξῶ; but my ſoul hath been wandring abroad, as *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks. I ſhould have come from under every Sermon as a ſheet comes from the Preſs, with all the ſtamps and lively impreſſions of the truths I heard upon my heart. But alaſs! If it had been demanded of me, as once it was of *Ariſtotle*, after a long and curious Oration, how he liked it, I might have anſwered as he did, Truly I did not hear it, for I was all the while minding another matter. Righteous art thou, O Lord, in all that is come upon us.

3. The ſilent Miniſters Reflection.

I am now as a Spring ſhut up, that can yield no refreſhment to thirſty ſouls, ready to periſh. Thou haſt ſaid to me as once to *Ezekiel*, *Son of man, behold, I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, and thou ſhalt be dumb.* This is a heavy judgment, but thou muſt be juſtified and cleared in it. Although men may not, yet God, if he pleaſe, may put a lighted candle under a buſhel. And herein I muſt acknowledge thy Righteouſneſs. Many times have I been ſinfully ſilent, when both thy glory and the intereſt of ſouls ingaged me to ſpeak. Moſt juſtly therefore haſt thou made my tongue to cleave to its roof. Little did I conſider the precioufneſs of ſouls, or the tremendous account to be given for them, at the appearing of the great Shepherd. I have now time enough to ſit down and mourn over former miſcarriages, and loſt opportunities. Lord reſtore me once again to a ſerviceable capacity, to a larger ſphere of activity for thee, for I am now become as a broken veſſel. It grieves me to the heart, to ſee thy flock ſcattered, to hear thy people cry to me, as once to *Joſeph*, *Give us bread, for why ſhould we dye in thy preſence?* Thy word is like fire ſhut up in my bones, and I am weary of forbearing. O, that thou wouldſt once again open the doors of thine houſe, that there may be bread enough in thine houſe for all thy children.

The

The *Poem.*

WHen God doth make the (1) heavens above us brass,
The earth's like iron. Flowers, herbs and grass
Have lost their fragrant green; are turned (2) yellow,
The brooks are dry, the pining Cattel (3) bellow.
The fat and flowry medows scorcht and burn'd.
The Countrey mirth is into (4) mourning turn'd.
The clefted earth, her thirsty mouth (5) sets ope,
Unto the empty Clouds; as 'twere in hope
Of some refreshing drops, that might allay
Her fiery thirst; but they soon pass away.
The pensive (6) Husbandman with his own eyes,
Bedews his Land, because he sees the skies
Refuse to do it, (7) just so stands the case,
When God from souls, removes the means of grace.
God's Ministers are Clouds, their doctrine (8) rain;
Which when the Lord in judgment shall restrain:
The peoples souls in short time will be found
In such a case, as this dry parched ground.
When this (9) sad judgment falls on any Nation,
Let Saints therein take up this lamentation.

O dreadful, dark, and dismal day!
How is our glory fled away.
Our Sun gone down, our stars o'recast;
God's heritage is now laid wast.
Our pining souls no bread can get,
With wantons God hath justly met,
When we are fed unto the full,
This man was tedious; that was dull.
But they are gone, and there remain
No such occations to complain.
Stars are not now for lights, but signs;
God knows of what heart-breaking times.
Sure heaven intends not peace, but wars;
In calling home Ambassadors.

(1) Deut. 28. 23.
(2) Joel 1. 19.
(3) Joel 1.20. Jer. 14. 26.
(4) Joel 1.11.
(5) Jer.14.4.
(6) Amos 5. 16.
(7) Amos 8. 11.
(8) Deut. 32. 2. Heb. 6. 7, 8.
(9) Hos. 9. 12.

How long did *Sodoms* judgment ſtay?
When Righteous *Lot* was ſnatcht away.
How long remain'd that ſtately Hall,
When *Sampſon* made the pillars fall?
When Horſmen, and commanders flye;
Wo to the helpleſs Infantry.
This is a ſad and fatal blow,
A publick loſs and overthrow.
You that ſo long have wiſh'd them gone,
Be quiet now; the thing is done.
Did they torment you ere your day?
God hath remov'd them out o'th'way.
Now ſleep in ſin, and take your eaſe;
Their Doctrine ſhall no more diſpleaſe.
But Lord! what ſhall become of us?
Our Teacher's gone; and left us thus!
To whom ſhall we our ſelves addreſs?
When Conſcience labours in diſtreſs?
O, who ſhall help us at our need?
Or pour in balm when wounds do bleed?
Help Lord, for unto thee our eyes
Do pour out tears; our groans, our cryes
Shall never ceaſe: till thou reſtore,
The mercies which we had before.
Till *Sions* paths where graſs now grows,
Be trodden by the feet of thoſe
That love thy name: and long t'enjoy
The mercies they have ſin'd away.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Seeds dye and rot, and then most fresh appear,
Saints bodies rise more orient than they were.

Upon the corrupting of the Seed before it spring.

OBSERVATION.

AFter the Seed is committed to the earth, it seems to perish and dye, as our Saviour speaks, *Joh.* 12. 24. *Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and dye, it abideth alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.* The death of the Corn in the earth is not a total death, but only the corruption or alteration of it: for if once the seminal life and vertue of it were quite extinguisht, it could never put forth blade or ear without a miracle. Yet, because that alteration is a kind of death, therefore Christ here uses it as a fit illustration of the resurrection. And indeed there is nothing in nature more apt to illustrate that great mystery. What a fragrant, green and beautiful blade do we see spring up from a corrupted seed? how black, and mouldy is that? how beautiful and verdant is this?

APPLICATION.

EVen thus shall the bodies of the Saints arise in beauty and glory at the Resurrection. *They are sown in dishonour, they are raised in glory; they are sown natural bodies, they are raised spiritual bodies,* 1 *Cor.* 15. 43, 44. The husbandman knows, that though the seed rot in the earth, yet it will rise again. And the believer knows, *That though after his skin worms destroy his body, yet in his flesh he shall see God,* Job 19. 25. *&c.* and the resemblance betwixt the seed sown, and springing up; and the bodies of the Saints dying, and rising again, lies in these following particulars.

First,

1. First, the Seed is committed to the earth from whence it came, ſo is the body of a Saint; earth it was, and to earth it is again reſolved. Grace exempts not the body of the beſt man from ſeeing corruption, *Rom.* 8. 10. Though Chriſt be in him, yet the body is dead; that is, ſentenced to death, becauſe of ſin, *Heb. 6. ult. It is appointed for all men once to dye.*

2. Secondly, The Seed was caſt into the earth in hope, 1 *Cor.* 9. 10. Were there not a reſurrection of it expected, the Husbandman would never be willing to caſt away his Corn. The bodies of Saints are alſo committed to the grave in hope, 1 *Theſ.* 4. 13, 14. *But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning thoſe which are aſleep, as thoſe which have no hope; for if we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even ſo alſo them which ſleep in Jeſus ſhall the Lord bring with him.* This bleſſed hope of a reſurrection, ſweetens, not only the the troubles of life, but the pangs of death.

3. Thidly, The ſeed is caſt into the earth ſeaſonably, in its proper ſeaſon. So are the bodies of the Saints, *John* 5. 26. *Thou ſhalt come to thy grave in a full age, as a ſhock of corn cometh in, in its ſeaſon.* They always dye in the fitteſt time, though ſometimes they ſeem to dye immaturately. The time of their death was from all eternity prefixt by God, beyond which they cannot go, and ſhort of which they cannot come.

4. The Seed lyes many days and nights under the clods, before it riſe and appear again. *Even ſo man lyeth down, and riſeth not again till the heavens be no more,* Job 14. 12. The days of darkneſs in the grave are many.

5. When the time is come for its ſhooting up, the earth that covered it can hide it no longer, it cannot keep it down a day more; it will find or make a way through the clods. So in that day when the great trump ſhall ſound, bone ſhall come to his bone, and the graves ſhall not be able to hold them a minute longer. Both Sea and earth muſt render the dead that are in them, *Rev.* 20. 13.

6. When the ſeed appears above ground again, it appears much more freſh and orient than when it was caſt into the earth. God cloaths it with ſuch beauty, that it is not like

to

to what it was before. Thus rise the bodies of Saints, marvellously improved, beautified and perfected with spiritual qualities and rich endowments; in respect whereof they are called spiritual bodies, 1 *Cor.* 15.43. not properly, but analogically spiritual; for look as spirits subsist without food, rayment, sleep, know no lassitude, weariness or pain; so our bodies after the resurrection shall be above these necessities and distempers; for we shall be as the Angels of God, *Mat.* 22.30. Yea, our vile bodies shall be changed, and made like unto Christs glorious body; which is the highest pitch, and ascent of glory and honour, that an humane body is capable of, *Phil.* 3.21. Indeed the glory of the soul shall be the greatest glory; that's the orient invaluable gem; but God will bestow a distinct glory upon the body, and richly enammel the very case in which that precious jewel shall be kept. In that glorious morning of the resurrection, the Saints shall put on their new fresh suits of flesh, richly laid and trimmed with glory. Those bodies which in the grave were but dust and rottenness, when it delivers them back again, shall be shining and excellent pieces, absolutely and everlastingly free'd. (1) From all natural infirmities and distempers; death is their good Physician, which at once freed them of all diseases. 'Tis a great Affliction now to many of the Lords people, to be clog'd with so many bodily infirmities which render them very unserviceable to God. *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* A crazy body retorts and shoots back its distempers upon the soul with which it is so closely conjoyned; but though now the soul (as *Theophrastus* speaks) payes a dear rent for the Tabernaelcle in which it dwells, yet when death dissolves that Tabernacle, all the diseases and pains under which it groaned shall be buried in the rubbish of its Mortality; and when they come to be re-united again, God will bestow rich gifts and dowries, even upon the body, in the day of its re-espousals to the soul. (2) It shall be freed from all deformities, there are no breaches, flaws, monstrosities in glorified bodies; but of them it may much rather be said, what was once said of *Absalom*, 2 *Sam.* 14.25. *That from the crown of the head, to the*

the ſole of his foot; there was no blemiſh in him; (3ly.) It ſhall be freed from all natural neceſſities, to which it is now ſubjected in this its animal ſtate. How is the Soul now diſquieted and tortured with cares and troubles, to provide for a periſhing body? Many unbelieving and unbecoming fears, it is now vexed with. What ſhall it eat? and what ſhall it drink? and wherewithal ſhall it be cloathed? *But meats for the belly, and the belly for meats; God ſhall deſtroy both it and them*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 13. (*i. e.*) as to their preſent uſe and office; for as to its exiſtence, ſo the belly ſhall not be deſtroyed. But even as the Maſts, Poop and Stern of a Ship abide in the Harbour after the voyage is ended, ſo ſhall theſe bodily members, as *Tertullian* excellently illuſtrates it. (4ly.) They ſhall be freed from death, to which thenceforth they can be ſubject no more; that formidable adverſary of nature ſhall aſſault it no more. *For they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage, neither can they dye any more; for they ſhall be equall to the Angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the Reſurrection*, Luke 20. 35, 36. Mark it [equal to the Angels] not that they ſhall be ſeparate, and ſingle ſpirits without bodies, as the Angels are, but equal to them in the way and manner of their living and acting. We ſhall then live upon God, and act freely, purely, and delightfully for God; for all kind of living upon, and delighting in creatures, ſeems in that Text (by a Synecdoche of the part which is ordinarily in Scripture put for all creature-delights, dependencies, and neceſſities) to be excluded. Nothing but God ſhall enamour and fill the ſoul, and the body ſhall be perfectly ſubdued to the ſpirit. Lord, what haſt thou prepared for them that love thee?

Ἰσαγγελῶς Βιῶντες.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The heathful Saints Reflection.

If I ſhall receive my body again, ſo dignified and improved in the world to come, then Lord let me never be unwilling to uſe my body now for the intereſt of thy glory, or my own Salvation. Now, O my God, it grieves me to think how

how many precious opportunities of serving and honouring thee, I have lost under pretence of endangering my health.

I have been more solicitous to live long and healthfully, than to live usefully and fruitfully; and like enough my life had been more serviceable to thee, if it had not been so fondly overvalued by me.

Foolish soul, hath God given thee a body for a living tool or instrument, and art thou afraid to use it? wherein is the mercy of having a body, if not in spending and wearing it out in the service of God? to have an active vigorous body, and not to imploy and exercise it for God, for fear of endangering its health, is as if one should give thee a handsome and sprightful horse upon condition that thou shouldst not ride or work him. O! if some of the Saints had enjoyed the blessing of such a healthy active body as mine, what excellent services would they have performed to God in it?

1. The sickly Saints Reflection.

If my body shall as surely rise again in glory, vigour and excellent endowments as the seed which I sow doth, why should not this comfort me over all the pains, weaknesses and dulness with which my soul is now clogg'd? Thou knowest my God, what a grief it hath been to my soul, to be fettered and intangled with the distempers and manifold indispositions of this vile body. It hath made me sigh and say, with holy *Anselme*, when he saw the mounting bird weighed down by the stone hanging at her leg, Lord, thus it fares with the soul of thy servant! fain would I serve, glorifie, and enjoy thee, but a distempered body will not let me. However, it is reviving to think, that though I am now forced to crawl like a worm in the discharge of my duties, I shall shortly fly like a Seraphim in the execution of thy will. Cheer up drooping soul, the time is at hand, when thou shalt be made more willing than thou art, and thy flesh not so weak as now it is.

2. The dying Saints reflection.

And is it so indeed? then let the dying Saint like *Jacob* rouze up himself upon his bed, and incourage himself against the fears of death by this refreshing consideration. Let him say with holy dying *Musculus*, Why trembleſt thou (O my soul) to go forth of this Tabernacle to the Land of rest?

rest? hath thy body been such a pleasant habitation to thee, that thou shouldst be so loath to part with it, though but for a time? and with assurance of receiving it again with such a glorious improvement? I know (O my soul) that thou hast a natural inclination to this body, refulting from the dear and strict union which God himself hath made betwixt thee and it: yea, even the holiest of men do sometimes sensibly feel the like in themselves; but beware thou love it not immoderately or inordinately; 'tis but a creature, how dear soever it be to thee: yea, a fading creature, and that which now stands in thy way to the full enjoyment of God. But say my soul, why are the thoughts of parting with it so burdensom to thee? Why so loath to take death by its cold hand? Is this body thy old and dear friend? True, but yet thou parteſt not with it upon such sad terms, as should deserve a tear at parting. For mayest thou not say of this departure, as *Paul* of the departure of *Onesimus*, Philem. *v.* 15. *If therefore departeth for a season that thou mayest receive it for ever.* The day of re-espousals will quickly come, and in the mean time as thy body shall not be sensible of the tedious length of interposing time, so neither shalt thou be solicitous about thine absent friend: for the fruition of God in that thine unbodied state, shall fill thee with infinite satisfaction and rest.

Or is it not so much simply for parting with it, as for the manner of thy parting, either by the slow and lingring approaches of a natural, or the quick and terrible approaches of a violent death: Why, trouble not thy self about that; for if God lead thee through the long dark lane of a tedious sickness, yet at the end of it is thy Fathers house. And for a violent death 'tis not so material, whether friends or enemies stand weeping or triumphing over thy dead body. *Nihil corpus sentit in nervo cum anima sit in cælo.* When thy soul shall be in heaven, 'twill not be sensible how thy body is used on earth.

4. The Ungodly souls Reflection.

But oh! what an uncomfortable parting will mine be? and how much more sad our meeting again! how will this soul and body blush, yea tremble when they meet, who have been

been copartners in so much guilt? I damned my soul, to please my flesh, and now have ruin'd both thereby; had I denied my flesh to serve Christ, worn out my body in the service of my soul; I had thereby happily provided for them both, but I began at the wrong end, and so have ruin'd both eternally.

The *Poem.*

BAre seeds have no great beauty, but inhum'd
That which they had is lost; and quite consum'd
They soon (*a*) corrupt, and grow more base by odds
When dead; and buried underneath the clods.
It falls in (*b*) baseness, but at length doth rise
In glory, which delights beholders eyes.
How great a difference have a few days made
Betwixt it, in the bushel, and the blade!
This lovely, lively emblem aptly may
Type out the glorious Resurrection day.
Wherein the Saints that in the dust do lye,
Shall rise in glory, vigour, dignity.
With singing in that (*c*) morning they arise,
And (*d*) dazling glory, such as mortal eyes
Ne're view'd on earth. The sparkling beauties here,
No more can equalize their splendor there:
Than glimmering glow-worms do the fairest star,
That shines in heaven; or the stones that are
In every street, may competition hold
With glittering diamonds in rings of gold.
For unto (*e*) Christ's most glorious body they
Shall be conform'd in glory, at that day:
Whose lustre would, should it on mortals fall,
Transport a *Stephen*, and confound a *Paul*.
'Tis now a course, and crazy house of clay:
But Oh! how dear do souls for lodging pay?

(*a*) Joh. 12. 24.
(*b*) 1 Cor. 15. 43.
(*c*) Psal. 49. 14.
(*d*) Mat. 13. 43.
(*e*) Phil. 3. 21.

Few more than I, for thou my soul hast bin
Within these tents of *Kedar* cooped in.
Where with distempers clog'd, thou mak'st thy moans,
And for deliverance with tears and groans;
(*f*) Rev. 7. 17. Hast often sued, cheer up, the (*f*) time will be
When thou from all these troubles shalt be free.
No jarring humors, cloudy vapours, rheums,
Pains, aches, or what ever else consumes,
My days in grief; whilst in the Christian race,
(*g*) Mat. 26. 41. Flesh lags behind; (*g*) and can't keep equal pace
With the more willing spirit: none of these,
Shall thenceforth clog thee, or disturb thine ease.

CHAP. XII.

As wheat resembled is by viler tares,
So vile hypocrisie like grace appears.

Upon the resemblance of wheat and tares.

OBSERVATION.

IT is *Jeroms* observation, that wheat and tares are so much alike in their first springing up, that it is exceeding difficult to distinguish the one from the other. These are his words, *Inter triticum & lolium quamdiu herba est, & nondum culmus venit ad spicam; grandis similitudo est: & in discernendo aut nulla, aut perdifficilis distantia.* The difference (saith he) between them is either none at all, or wonderful difficult to discern, which those words of Christ, *Mat.* 13. 30. plainly confirm. Let them both alone till the Harvest; thereby intimating both the difficulty of distinguishing the tares and wheat; as also, the unwarrantable rashness of bold and hasty censures of mens sincerity or hypocrisie, which is there shadowed by them.

A P-

APPLICATION.

HOw difficult soever it be to discern the difference betwixt wheat and tares; yet doubtless the eye of sense can much easier discriminate them, than the most quick and piercing eye of man can discern the difference betwixt special and common grace: for all saving graces in the Saints have their counterfeits in hypocrites. There are *similar works in these*, which a spiritual and very judicious eye may easily mistake for the *saving and genuine effects* of the sanctifying Spirit.

Doth the Spirit of God convince the consciences of his people, of the evil of sin? *Rom.* 7. 9. Hypocrites have their convictions too, *Exod.* 10, 19. *Then* Pharaoh *called for* Moses *and* Aaron *in haste, and he said, I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you.* Thus was *Paul* also convicted, 1 *Sam.* 15. 24.

Doth true conviction and compunction work reformation of life, in the people of God? even hypocrites also have been famous for their reformations. The unclean spirit often goes out of the formal hypocrite, by an external reformation; and yet still retains his propriety in them, *Mat.* 12. 43, 44. For that departure is indeed no more than a politick retreat. Many that shall never escape the damnation of hell, have yet escaped the pollutions of the world, and that by the knowledge of the Son of God, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20.

Doth the spirit of the Lord produce that glorious and supernatural work of faith, in convinced and humbled souls? in this also the hypocrite apes and imitates the believer, *Acts* 8. 13. *Then* Simon *himself believed also*, Luke 8. 13. *These are they which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

Doth the precious eye of faith, discovering the transcendent excellencies that are in Christ, inflame the affections of the believing soul with vehement desires and longings after him? Strange motions of heart have also been found in hypocrites

pocrites towards Christ and heavenly things, *John* 6. 34. *Lord evermore give us this bread*, Mat. 25. 8. *Give us of your oyl, for our lamps are gone out.* With what a rapture was *Balaam* transported, when he said, *Let me dye the death of the righteous, and my last end be like his?* Numb. 23. 10.

Doth the work of faith in some believers bear upon its top branches, the full ripe fruits of a blessed assurance? Lo! What strong confidences, and high-built perswasions of an interest in God, have sometimes been found, even in unsanctified ones, *John* 8. 54. *Of whom you say, that he is your God, and yet ye have not known him.* To the same height of confidence arrived those vain souls, mentioned in *Rom.* 2. 19. Yea, so strong may this false assurance be, that they dare boldly venture to go to the judgment seat of God, and there defend it, *Mat.* 7. 22. *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?*

Doth the Spirit of God fill the heart of the assured Believer with joy unspeakable and full of Glory, giving them through faith a prelibation or foretaste of heaven it self, in those first fruits of it? How near to this comes that which the Apostle supposes may be found even in Apostates! *Heb.* 6. 8, 9. who are there said, *to taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.* What shall I say if real Christians delight in Ordinances, those that are none may also delight in approaching to God, *Ezek.* 33. 32. It may be you will say, though the difference be not easily discernable in their active obedience; yet, when it shall come to suffering, there every eye may discern it: the false heart will then flinch, and cannot brook that work. And yet, even this is no infallible rule neither; for the Apostle supposes, that the *Salamander* of hypocrisie may live in the very flames of Martyrdom, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. *If I give my body to be burnt, and have not charity.* And it was long since determined in this case, *Non pœna, sed causa facit Martyrem*; so that without controversie, the difficulty of distinguishing them is very great.

And this difference will yet be more subtile and undiscernible, if I should tell you, that as in so many things, the hypo-

hypocrite resembles the Saint: So there are other things in which a real Christian may act too like an hypocrite. When we find a *Pharaoh* confessing, an *Herod* practising, as well as hearing, a *Judas* preaching Christ, an *Alexander* venting his life for *Paul*; and on the other side, shall find a *David* condemning that in another, which he practised himself; an *Hezekiah* glorying in his riches, a *Peter* dissembling, and even all the Disciples forsaking Christ in an hour of trouble and danger. O then! how hard is it for the eye of man to discern betwixt chaff and wheat? how many upright hearts are now censured, whom God will clear? how many false hearts are now approved, whom God will condemn? men ordinarily have no clear convictive proofs, but only probable symptoms, which at most can beget but a conjectural knowledge of anothers state. And they that shall peremptorily judge either way, may possibly wrong the generation of the upright; or on the other side, absolve and justifie the wicked. And truly, considering what hath been said it is no great wonder that dangerous mistakes are so frequently made in this matter. But though man cannot, the Lord both can, and will perfectly discriminate them. *The Lord knoweth who are his*, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. He will have a day perfectly to sever the tares from the wheat, to melt off the varnish of the most resplendent and refined hypocrite, and to blow off the ashes of infirmities, which have covered and obscured the very sparks of sincerity in his people. He will make such a division as was never yet made in the world, how many divisions soever there have been in it. *And then shall men indeed return, and discern betwixt the righteous and the wicked, betwixt him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not.* Mean while (my soul) thou canst not better imploy thy self, whether thou be found or unfound, than in making these reflections upon thy self.

REFLECTIONS.

AND is this so? then Lord pardon the rashness and precipitancy of my consorious spirit; for I have often boldly

The censorious souls reflection.

boldly anticipated thy judgment, and assumed thy prerogative, although thou hast said, *Why dost thou judge thy brother? and why dost thou set at nought thy brother? we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ; for it is written, as I live (saith the Lord) every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. Let us therefore not judge one another any more*, Rom. 14. 10, 11, 12, 13. And again. *He that judgeth me is the Lord. Let us therefore judge nothing before the time, untill the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart; and then shall every man have praise of God*, 1 Cor. 4. 4, 5.

What if God will own some of them for his Sons, to whom I refuse to give the respect of brethren? I may pass hasty and headlong censures upon others, but where is my commission for so doing? I want not only a commission, but fit qualifications for such a work as this. Can I pierce into the heart as God? Can I infallibly discover the hidden motives, ends, and principles of actions? Besides, O my soul! thou art conscious of so much falsness in thy self, that were there no other consideration, that alone might deter thee from all uncharitable and hasty censures. If others knew but what I know of my self, would they not judge as severely of me, as I do of others?

2. The presumptuous souls reflection.

Though I may not judge the final state of another, yet I may and ought to judge the state of my own soul; which is doubtless a more necessary and concerning work to me. For since every saving grace in a Christian hath its counterfeit in the hypocrite, how needful is it, for thee, (O my soul) to make a stand here, and solemnly to ponder this great question! whether those things whereon I depend as my best evidences for the life to come, be the real, or only the common works of the Spirit? whether they be such as can now endure the test of the Word, and abide a fair trial at the bar of my own conscience?

Come then, my soul! set the Lord before thee, to whom the secrets of all hearts are manifest; and in the awful sence of that great day, make true answer to these heart-discovering queries; for though thou canst not discern the difference

difference betwixt these things in another, yet thou mayest and oughtest to discern it in thy self; for what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of a man that is in him?

First, Is my obedience uniform? am I the same man in all times, places and companies? or rather, am I not exact and curious in open and publick; remiss and careless, in private and secret duties? sincere souls are uniform souls, *Psal.* 119. 6. the hypocrite is no closet-man, *Mat.* 6. 5. 1.

Secondly, Doth that which I call grace in me, oppose and mortifie, or doth it not rather quietly consist with, and protect my lusts and corruptions? true grace tolerates no lust, Gal. 5. 17. No, not the bosom darling-corruption, *Psal.* 18. 23. 2.

Thirdly, Doth that which I call my grace, humble, empty and abase my soul? or rather, doth it not puff it up with self-conceitedness? all saving grace is humble grace, 1 *Cor.* 15. 10. *But the soul which is lifted up, is not upright* Hab. 2. 4. 3.

Lastly, Canst thou (my soul) rejoyce and bless God for the grace imparted to others? and rejoyce, if any design for *Christ* be carried on in the world by other hands? or rather, dost thou not envie those that excell thee, and care for no work in which thou art not seen? 4.

But stay my soul, it is enough: If these be the substantial differences betwixt special and common grace, I more than doubt, I shall not endure the day of his coming, *Whose fan is in hand.* Do not those spots appear upon me, which are not the spots of his children? Wo is me, poor wretch, the characters of death are upon my soul! Lord, add power to the form, life to the name to live, practice to the knowledge, or I perish eternally! O rather give me the *Saints heart* than the *Angels tongue*; the poorest breathing of my Spirit, than the richest ornaments of common gifts! let me neither deceive my self or others, in matters of so deep and everlasting cosequence!

The *Poem.*

IN Eastern Countries, as good Authors write,
Tares in their springing up appear to sight;
Not like it self, a weed; but real wheat;
Whose shape, and form it counterfeits so neat;
Though 'twould require a most judicious eye,
The one from t'other to diversifie.
Till both to some maturity be grown,
And then the difference is easily known.
(1) Even thus (1) hypocrisie that cursed weed,
Springs up so like true grace, that he will need
More than a common insight in this case,
That saith this is not, that is real grace.
Ne're did the cunning Actor, though a slave
Array'd in princely robes; himself behave
So like a King; as this doth act the part
Of saving grace, by its deep hellish art.
(2) Luk. 7.38. Do gracious soals (2) melt, mourn and weep for sin?
(3) Sam 15.24. The like in (3) hypocrites observ'd hath been.
(4) 1 Pet. 1.8. Have they their (4) comforts, joys, and raptures sweet?
(5) Joh. 5. 33, With them in comforts (5) hypocrites do meet.
In all Religious duties, they can go
As far as Saints; in some things farther too.
(6) Num. 24.4. They speak like Angels, (6) and you'l think within
The very spirit of Christ; and grace hath bin.
They come so neer, that some like *Isaac* take
Jacob for *Esau*; this, for that mistake.
And boldly call (their eyes with his being dim)
True grace hypocrisie, and duty sin.
Yea, many also *Jacob* like embrace
Leah for *Rachel*, common gifts for grace.
And in their bosoms hug it, till the light
Discover their mistake; and clear their sight.
And then like him, confounded they will cry,
Alas! 'tis *Leah* curs'd hypocrisie.

Guide

Guide me my God, that I may not in ſtead
Of ſaving grace, nurſe up this curſed weed.
O let my heart by thee at laſt be found
Sincere, and all thy workings on it ſound.

CHAP. IX.

Fowls, weeds, and blaſtings do your corn annoy,
Even ſo corruptions would your grace deſtroy.

Upon the dangers incident to corn, from ſeed-time to Harveſt.

OBSERVATION.

THere are (amongſt many others) three critical and dangerous periods, betwixt the ſeed-time and Harveſt. The firſt, when corn is newly committed to the earth, all that lies uncovered is quickly pickt up by the birds; and much of that which is but ſlightly covered, is ſtockt up as ſoon as it begins to ſprout, by Rooks and other devouring fowls, *Mat.* 13. 4. but if it eſcape the fowls, and gets root in the earth, yet then is it hazarded by noxious weeds, which purloin and ſuck away its nouriſhment, whilſt it is yet in the tender blade. If by the care of the vigilant Husbandman it be freed from choaking weeds; yet laſtly, as great a danger as any of the former ſtill attends it; for oftentimes, whilſt it is blowing in the ear, blaſtings, and mildews, ſmite it in the ſtalk, which cuts off the juice and ſap that ſhould aſcend to nouriſh the ear; and ſo ſhrivels and dries up the grain whilſt it is yet immature, whereby it becomes like thoſe ears of corn in *Pharaohs* viſion, which were thin, and blaſted with the Eaſt wind; or like the ears the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks of upon the houſe top, wherewith the reaper filleth not his arms.

APPLICATION.

TRue grace from the infancy to the perfection thereof conflicts with far more greater dangers, amongſt which it anſwerably meets with three dangerous periods which marvellouſly hazard it: ſo that it is a much greater wonder that it ever arrives at its juſt perfection. For 1. no ſooner hath the great Husbandman diſſeminated theſe holy ſeeds in the regenerate heart, but multitudes of impetuous corruptions immediately aſſault, and would certainly devour them like the fowls of the air, did not the ſame arm that ſowed them, alſo protect them. It fares with grace, as with *Chriſt* its Author, whom *Herod* ſought to deſtroy in his very infancy. The new creature is ſcarce warm in its ſeat, before it muſt fight to defend its ſelf. This conflict is excellently ſet forth in that famous Text, *Gal.* 5. 17. *The fleſh luſteth againſt the ſpirit, and the ſpirit againſt the fleſh, and theſe are contrary the one to the other; ſo that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*

By *fleſh* here, underſtand the corruption of nature by original ſin, and the ſinful motions thereof; by *ſpirit*, not the ſoul, or natural ſpirit of man, but the ſpirit of God in man, *viz.* thoſe graces in men which are the workmanſhip of the Spirit, and therefore called by his name. The oppoſition betwixt theſe two is expreſſed by luſting (*i. e.*) deſiring the mutual ruine and deſtruction of each other; for even when they are not acting, yet then they are luſting, there is an oppoſite diſpoſition againſt each other; which oppoſition is both a *formal* and an *effective* oppoſition. There are two contrary forms to men in every Saint, *Col.* 3. 9, 10. From hence an effective oppoſition muſt needs follow, for as things are in their natures and principles, ſo they are in their operations and effects; workings always follow beings; fire and water are of two contrary qualities, and when they meet, they effectively oppoſe each other. Sin and grace are ſo oppoſite, that if ſin ſhould ceaſe to oppoſe grace, it would ceaſe to be ſin; and if grace ſhould not oppoſe ſin, it

it would ceaſe to be grace. And this doth much more endanger the work of grace, than any other enemy it hath; becauſe it works againſt it more *inwardly*, *conſtantly*, and *advantagiouſly*, than any thing elſe can do. 1. More inwardly; for it hath its being and working in the ſame ſoul where grace dwells, yea, in the ſelf ſame faculties, ſo that it not only ſets one faculty againſt another, but the ſame faculty againſt it ſelf, the underſtanding againſt the underſtanding, and the will againſt the will, ſo that ye cannot do the good, nor yet the evil that you would; not the good that ye would, becauſe when the ſpirit moves to good, and beats up the heart by divine pulſations, exciting it to duty, the fleſh croſſes, and oppoſes it there; and if it cannot totally hinder the performance of a duty, yet it lames the ſoul upon the working hand, whereby the performance is not ſo ſpiritual, free and compoſed, as it deſires; nor yet the evil that you would commit, if grace were not there, becauſe when luſt ſtirs in its firſt motions, grace puts a rub in its way. *How can I do this great wickedneſs, and ſin againſt God?* Gen. 39. 9. And if it cannot (which for the moſt part it doth) hinder the acting of ſin, yet it ſo engages the will againſt it, that it is not committed with complacency and full content, *Rom.* 7. 15. *What I do I allow not.* 2. It oppoſes it more *conſtantly*, it's like a continual dropping: a man can no more fly from this enemy, than from himſelf. There is a time when the Devil leaves tempting, *Mat.* 4 11. but no time when corruption ceaſes from working. And laſtly, it oppoſes grace more *advantagiouſly* than any other enemy can do, for it is not only alwayes in the ſame ſoul with it, but it is there naturally; it hath the advantage of the ſoul which ſuits with it. And yet, O the wonder of free grace! it is not ſwallowed up in victory, it eſcapes this hazard.

But (2ly.) it ſoon meets with another, though it eſcape this, even by temptations which ſtrike deſperately at the very life of it; for theſe like the weeds, with ſeemingly loving imbraces, claſp about it; and did not the faithful God now make a way to eſcape, inſtead of an harveſt, we ſhould have an heap: For, alas, what are we! to wreſtle with

with principalities and powers, and spiritual wickednesses in high places?

Lastly, sad relapses like blasts and rustings do often fade and greatly endanger it, when it's even ready for the Harvest. Thus it fell out with *David*, whose last ways were not like his first; and yet by this, these holy fruits are not utterly destroyed, because it is the seed of God; and so is immortal, 1 *John* 5. 4, 5. and also because the promises of perseverance and victory made to it, cannot be frustrated; amongst which these are excellent, *Isa.* 54. 10. *Jer.* 34. 40. 1 *Cor.* 1. 8. *Psal.* 1. 3. *Psal.* 125. 1. *John.* 4. 14. So that here is matter of unspeakable comfort; though the flesh say, *Ego deficiam:* I will fail thee; though the world say, *Ego decipiam*, I will deceive thee; though the devil say, *Ego eripiam*, I will snatch thee away; yet as long as *Christ* saith, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee; thy graces are secure, in the midst of all these enemies.

REFLECTIONS.

I. The Apostates Reflection.

THis soul of mine was once plowed up by conviction, and sown (as I thought) with the seed of God. In those days many purposes and good resolutions began to chink and bud forth, promising a blessed Harvest: But O! (with what consternation and horror should I speak it;) the cares and pleasures of this life; the lusts and corruptions of my base heart springing up, have quite destroyed and choakt it; by which it appears, it was not the seed of God, as I then imagin'd it to be; and now my expected harvest shall be an heap, in the day of grief, and desperate sorrow, *Isa.* 17. 11. I had convictions, but they are gone: troubles for sin, conscience of duties, but all is blasted, and my soul is now as a barren field, which God hath cursed.

Wo is me! I have revolted from God, and now that dreadful word, *Jer.* 17. 5, 6. is evidently fulfilled upon me; *For I am like the heath in the desart, that seeth not when good cometh; my soul inhabits the parched places of the wilderness.* Alas! all my formal and heartless duties were but as so many scare-

scare-crows in the field, which could not defend these slight workings from being devoured by the infernal fowls. Had these principles been the seed of God, no doubt they would have continued and overcome the world, 1 *John* 2. 19. Wretched soul! thy case is sad, it will be better with the uncultivated wilderness, than with such a miscarrying soyl, unless the great Husbandman plow thee up the second time, and sow thy heart with better seed.

2. The careless souls reflection.

And are the corruptions of my heart to grace, what fowls, weeds, and mildews are to the corn? O what need have I then to watch my heart, and keep it with all diligence; for in the life of that grace is wrapt up the life of my soul. He that carries a candle in his hand in a blustring stormy night, had need to cover it close, lest it be blown out, and he left in darkness. O let me never say, God hath promised it shall persevere, and therefore I need not be so solicitous to preserve it; for as this inference is quite opposite to the nature of true grace and assurance, which never encourage to carelesness, but provoke the soul to an industrious use of means to preserve it. So, it is in in it self an irrational and sensless conclusion, which will never follow from any Scripture promise: for although it is readily granted, that God hath made many comfortable and sweet promises to the graces of his people, yet we must expect to enjoy the benefits and blessings of all those promises, in that way and order in which God hath promised them; and that is in the careful and diligent use of those means which he hath prescribed, *Ezek.* 36. 36, 37. for promises do not exclude, but imply the use of means, *Acts* 27. 31. I know my life is determined to a day, to an hour and I shall live out every minute God hath appointed; but yet, I am bound to provide food, rayment and Phylick to preserve it.

3. The doubting souls reflection

To conclude, let all doubting Christians reflect seriously upon this truth, and suck marrow and fatness out of it to strengthen and establish them against all their fears; your life, your spiritual life, hath for many years hanged in suspence before you; and you have often said with *David*, I shall one day fall by the hand of *Saul*. Desponding, trembling

bling ſoul, lift up thine eyes and look upon the fields; the corn lives ſtill, and grows up: though birds have watcht to devour it, ſnows have covered it, beaſts have cropt it, weeds have almoſt choakt it, yet it's preſerved. And hath not God more care of that precious ſeed of his own ſpirit in thee, than any Husbandman hath of his corn? hath he not ſaid, *That having begun the good work in thee; he will perfect it to the day of Chriſt?* Phil. 2. 6. Hath he not ſaid, *I give unto them eternal life, and they ſhall never periſh?* John 12. 28. Haſt thou not many times ſaid, and thought of it, as thou doſt now, and yet it lives? O, what matter of unſpeakable joy and comfort is this to upright ſouls! Well then, be not diſcouraged, for thou doſt not run as one uncertain, nor fight as one that beats the air, 1 *Cor.* 9. 26. but the foundation of God ſtands ſure, having this ſeal, the Lord knows who are his, 2 *Tim.* 2. 19. Though thy grace be weak, thy God is ſtrong, though the ſtream ſeem ſomtimes to fail, yet it's fed by an everlaſting flowing fountain.

The *Poem.*

'Tis juſtly wondered that an ear of corn,
Should come at laſt in ſafty to the Barn.
It runs through many hazards, threatning harms
Betwixt the ſowers hands, and reapers arms.
The earth no ſooner takes it from the ſack
But you may ſee behind the ſowers back
(1) Mat. 13. 4, 5 A troop of (1) thieves, which would at once deſtroy
That ſeed in which lies hid the ſeed of joy.
This dangerous period paſt, it ſoon doth fall
Into a ſecond no leſs critical.
It ſhooteth forth the tender blade, and then
(2) Mat. 13. 7. The noxious (2) weeds encumber it agen.
Theſe claſp about it till they kindly choak
The corn, as flattering Ivy doth the oak.

Are

Are weeds deſtroyed, and all that danger paſt?
Lo now another comes, the worſt at laſt.
For when i'th ear it blows, begins to kern,
As mildew (3) ſmites it which you can't diſcern;
Nor any way prevent, till all be loſt;
The corn deſtroy'd with all your hopes and coſt.
Thus ſaving grace, that precious ſeed of joy;
Which hell and nature plot (4) how to deſtroy,
Eſcapes ten thouſand (5) dangers firſt and laſt.
O who can ſay now all the danger's paſt?
'Tis like a crazy bark toſt in a ſtorm,
Or like a Taper which is ſtrangely born
Without a lanthorn, in a bluſtring night;
Or like to glimmering ſparks whoſe dying light
Is ſtill preſerv'd: The roaring waves ſwell high
Like moving mountains in the darkned ſky
On their proud backs the little bark is even
Mounted unto the battlements of heaven,
From thence diſmounted to the deeps doth ſlide
Receiving water upon every ſide;
Yet he whoſe voice the proudeſt waves obey
Brings it at laſt into the quiet key.
The bluſtring winds ſtrive with a fatal puff,
To bring the taper to a ſtinking ſnuff;
Their churliſh blaſts extinguiſh it, and then;
Our gentle breath recovers it agen.
The fainting ſparks beneath the aſhes lye,
Where choakt and ſmother'd they begin to dye;
But theſe collected, we do gently blow,
Till from faint ſparks to lively flames they grow.
Even thus is grace preſerv'd, thus kept alive;
By conſtant wonders, Grace doth live and thrive.

(3) Hag. 2. 16, 17.
(4) Gal. 5. 13.
(5) Rev. 3. 2.

CHAP. IX.

Upon the patience of the Husbandman for the Harvest.

Our Husbandmen for Harvest wait and stay,
O let not any Saint do less than they.

OBSERVATION.

THE expectation of a good Harvest at last, makes the Husbandman with untired patience to digest all his labours, he that ploughs, ploughs in hope, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. and they are not so irrational to think, they shall presently be partakers of their hope, nor so foolish to anticipate the Harvest, by cutting down their corn before it be fully ripened, but are content to plow, sow and weed it, and when it's fully ripe, then they go forth into their fields and reap it down with joy.

APPLICATION.

CAN a little Corn cause men to digest so many difficult labours, and make them wait with invincible patience till the reaping time come? much more should the expectation of eternal glory steel and fortify my spirit against all intercurrent hardships and difficulties. It least of all becomes a Christian to be of an hasty and impatient spirit. *Light is sown for the righteous, and joy for the upright in heart,* Psalm 92. 11. *Behold the Husbandman waiteth,* &c. Jam. 5. 7. *Be patient therefore my Brethren, for the coming of the Lord draws neer.* There are three great arguments to perswade Christians to a long suffering and patient frame under sufferings. (1) The example of Christ, *Isa.* 53. 7. to think how quietly he suffered all injuries and difficulties with invincible patience, is sufficient to shame the best of Christians, who are of such short spirits. I have read of one *Elezarius* a noble

man

man, that when his wife wondred at his exceeding great patience in bearing injuries; he thus answered her, You know sometimes my heart is ready to rise with indignation against such as wrong me, but I presently begin to think of the wrongs that Christ suffered, and say thus to my self, although thy servant should pluck thy beard, and smite thee on the face, this were nothing to what thy Lord suffered: he suffered more and greater things; and assure your self (wife) I never leave off thinking on the injuries done to my Saviour, till such time as my mind be still and quiet. To this purpose it was well noted by *Bernard*, speaking of Christ's humility; was Christ the Lord of Glory thus humbled and emptied of his fulness of Glory? and shall such a worm as I swell? (2) The desert of sin, *Lam.* 3.39. *Why doth the living man complain?* It was a good saying of blessed *Greenham*: When sin lies heavy, affliction lies light. And it is a famous instance which Dr. *Taylor* gives us of the *Duke* of *Condey*; I have read (saith he) when the *Duke* of *Condia* had voluntarily entred into the incommodities of a religious poverty and retirement; he was one day spied and pitied by a Lord of *Italy*, who out of tenderness wisht him to be more careful and nutritive of his person; the good *Duke* answered, Sir, be not troubled, and think not that I am ill provided of conveniencies, for I send an harbinger before me that makes ready my lodgings, and takes care that I be royally entertained. The Lord asked him who was his Harbinger? He answered, the knowledg of my self, and the consideration of what I deserve for my sins, which is eternal torments; and when with this knowledge I arrive at my lodging, how unprovided soever I find it, methinks it is ever better than I deserve; and as the sense of sin which merits hell, sweetens present difficulties: So, (to come home to the present similitude) do the expectations, and hopes of a blessed harvest, and reward in Heaven. This made *Abraham* willing to wander up and down many years as a stranger in the world; for he looked for a City that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. The hopes of such a harvest is incouragement enough to work hard, and wait long; yet

Dr. *Taylors* great Exemplar, *p.* 103.

some Christians are so impatient of it, that they would fain be reaping before the time; but as God hath by an unalterable law of nature, appointed both the seasons of Seed time and Harvest (which are therefore called the appointed weeks of the harvest) *Jer.* 5. 24. and these cannot be hasten'd; but when we have done all that we can on our part, must wait till God send the former and latter rain, and given every natural cause its effect. So is it in reference to our spiritual harvest; we are appointed to sweat in the use of all God's appointments, and when we have done all, must patiently wait till the divine decrees be accomplished, and the time of the promise be fully come; In due time we shall reap, if we faint not. To which patient expectation, and quiet waiting for the glory to come, these following considerations are of excellent use.

1. As the Husbandman knows when the seed time is past, it will not be long to the harvest; and the longer he waits, the nearer still it is. So the Christian knows, *It is but yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry*, Heb. 10. 37. *And that now his Salvation is nearer than when he first believed*, Rom. 13. 11. What a small point of time is our waiting time, compared with eternity? yet a few dayes more, and then comes the long expected and welcome harvest.

2. The Husbandman can find other work to do, before the reaping time come; he need not stand idle, though he cannot yet reap. And cannot a Christian find any work to do for God, till he comes to Heaven? O, there is much work to do and such work as is only proper to this season. You may now reprove sin, exhort to duty, succour the distressed, this is good work, and this is your only time for such work; the whole of eternity will be taken up in other imployments, *I think it meet* (saith Peter) *as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir up your minds, knowing shortly, that I must put off this tabernacle*, 2 *Pet.* 1. 13, 14. *q. d.* I know I have but a little time to work among you, I am almost at heaven; and therefore am willing to husband this present moment as well as I can for you. O Christians! you need not stand idle, look round about

about you upon the multitude of forlorn ſinners, ſpeak now to them for God, ſpeak now to God for them; for ſhortly you ſhall ſo ſpeak no more, you ſhall ſee them no more till you ſee them at Chriſt's Bar; God leaves you here for their ſakes, up and be doing: If you had done all you were to do for your ſelves and them, he would have you to heaven immediately, you ſhould not wait a moment longer for your glory.

3. Husbandmen know, though they cannot yet gather in the precious fruits of the earth, yet all this while they are ripening and preparing for the harveſt; they would not houſe it green, or take it before its time. And is not this alſo my preparation time for glory? As God prepared heaven for his people, by an eternal *decree*, Mat. 25. 34. by an act of *creation*, Heb. 11. 10. by the death of Chriſt, which made a purchaſe of it, *Heb.* 10. 19, 20. and by his aſcenſion into it, *John* 14. 2, 3. So the reaſon why we are kept here, is in order to our fitting for it. Heaven is ready, but we are not fully ready; the Barn is fit to receive the corn, but the corn is not yet fit to be gathered into it. *But for this ſelf ſame thing God is now working us*, 2 Cor. 5. 5. he is every day at work, by Ordinances, and by providences, to perfect his work in us; and as ſoon as that is finiſhed, we ſhall hear a voice like that, *Rev.* 11. 12. *Come up hither, and immediately we ſhall be in the ſpirit:* for how ardently ſoever we long for that deſirable day, Chriſt longs for it more than we can do.

4. The Husbandman is glad of the firſt fruits, that encourages him, though the greateſt part be yet out; and have not you received the firſt fruits of that glory? have you not earneſts, pledges, and firſt fruits of it? 'Tis your own fault, if every day you feed not upon ſuch bleſſed comforts of the ſpirit, *Rom.* 8. 23. *Rom.* 5. 2. 1 *Pet.* 8. 9. O how might the interpoſing time, even all the days of your patience here, be ſweetned with ſuch prelibations of the glory to come!

5. Husbandmen know 'tis beſt to reap, when 'tis fit to reap; one handful fully ripe, is worth many ſheaves of green corn. And you know, heaven will be ſweeteſt to you, when you are moſt fit for it; the child would pluck the apple while it's green,

green, but he might gather it easier, and taste it sweeter, by tarrying longer for it. We would fain be glorified *per saltum*. When we have got a taste of heaven, we are all in haste to be gone. Then, O that I had wings like a dove! I would flie away, and be at rest. Then we cry to God for our selves, as *Moses* for his sister *Miriam*, *Heal her* [*now*] *O God, I beseech thee*, Numb. 12. 13. Glorify me now, O Lord, I pray thee! But surely, as God hath contrived thy glory in the best of ways, so he hath appointed for thee the fittest of seasons; and when ever thou art gathered into glory, thou shalt come as a shock of corn in its season.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The longing souls reflection.

I Have waited for thy salvation, O God! Having received thy first fruits, my soul longs to fill its bosome with the full ripe sheaves of glory. *As the heart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul for thee, O God*! O, when shall I come and appear before God? I desire to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. When shall I see that most lovely face? When shall I hear his soul-transporting voice? Some need patience to die, I need it as much to live! Thy sights, O God, by faith, have made this world a burden, this body a burden, and this soul to cry like thirsty *David*, O that one would give me of the waters of *Bethlehem* to drink! The Husbandman longs for his Harvest, because it is the reward of all his toyl and labour; but what is his harvest to mine? what is a little corn to the enjoyment of God? What is the joy of Harvest, to the joy of Heaven? what are the shoutings of men in the fields, to the acclamations of glorified spirits in the Kingdom of God? Lord, I have gone forth bearing more precious seed than they; when shall I return rejoyceing, bringing my sheaves with me? Their Harvest comes when they receive their corn, mine comes when I leave it. O much desired Harvest! O day of the gladness of my heart! How long Lord? How long? Here I wait as the poor man at *Bethesdah's pool*, looking when my turn will come, but every one steps into heaven before me; yet Lord, I am content

content to wait till my time be fully come. I would be content to ſtay for my *glorification*, till I have finiſht the work of my *generation*; and when I have done the will of God, then to receive the promiſe. If thou have any work on earth to uſe me in, I am content to abide: Behold, the Husbandman waiteth, and ſo will I; for thou art a God of judgment, and bleſſed are all they that wait for thee.

2. The lingring ſouls reflection.

But how doth my ſloathful ſoul ſink down into the fleſh, and ſettle it ſelf in the love of this animal life? How doth it hug, and wrap up it ſelf in the garment of this mortality, not deſiring to be removed hence, to the more perfect and bleſſed ſtate? the Husbandman indeed is content to ſtay till the appointed weeks of the Harveſt; but would he be content to wait always? O my ſenſual heart! Is this life of hope as contentful to thee, as the life of viſion will be? Why doſt thou not groan within thy ſelf, that this mortality might be ſwallowed up of life? doth not the Scripture deſcribe the Saints by their earneſt looking for the mercy of our Lord Jeſus unto eternal life? *Judges* 21. *By their haſtening unto the coming of the day of God,* 2 *Pet.* 3. 12. What is the matter that my heart hangs back? doth guilt lye upon my conſcience? Or have I gotten into a pleaſant condition in the world which makes me ſay as *Peter* on the Mount, *It's good to be here?* Or want I the aſſurance of a better ſtate? Muſt God make all my earthly comforts die, before I ſhall be willing to die? Awake Faith, awake my Love; beat up the drowzy deſires of my ſoul, that I may ſay, make haſt my Beloved, and come away.

The

The *Poem*.

NO prudent Husbandman expects
the fruit of what he ſows,
Till every cauſe have its effects;
(1) John 4.35 and (1) then he reaps and mows.

(2) 1 Cor. 9.10 He works in (2) hope the year throughout,
and counts no labour loſt;
If when the ſeaſon comes about
(3) 1 Cor. 9.10 His Harveſt (3) quits his coſt.

(4) Jam. 5. 7. This rare (4) example juſtly may
rebuke, and put to ſhame;
My ſoul which ſows its ſeed one day,
and looks to reap the ſame.

(5) Gal. 5.17. Is curſed (5) nature now become
ſo kind a ſoyl to grace,
That to perfection it ſhould come
within ſo ſhort a ſpace.

(6) 1 Pet. 4.18. Grace ſprings not up with ſpeed and (6) eaſe
like muſhrooms in a night
(7) Rom. 1. 7. But rather by (7) degrees increaſe
(8) Prov. 4.18 as doth the (8) morning light.

Is corn ſo dear to husbandmen?
(9) Pſal. 4.6 47 much more is (9) heaven to me,
Why ſhould not I have patience then?
to wait as well as he.

(1) Acts 7. 17. To promiſes (1) appointed years.
by God's decrees are ſet;
Theſe once expir'd beyond its fears
my ſoul ſhall quickly get.

How

How (2) small a part of hasty time
which (3) quickly will expire,
Doth me within this world confine,
and then comes my desire.

(2) Heb 13.14.
(3) Heb. 17.10.

Come Lord, (4) how long! my soul hath gasp'd.
faith my affections (5) warms.
O when shall my poor soul be clasp'd,
in its redeemers arms.

(4) Rev. 22.17.
(5) Heb. 11.13.

The time seems (6) long, yet here I'le lye
till thou my God do call,
It is enough, eternity
will make (7) amends for all.

(6) Rom. 8.23.
(7) Rom. 8.18.

CHAP. XIX.

Corn fully ripe, is reap'd, and gather'd in.
So must your selves when ripe in grace or sin.

Upon the harvest season.

OBSERVATION.

WHen the fields are white to harvest, then Husbandmen walk through them, rub the ears, and finding the grain full and solid, they presently prepare their Sithes and Sickles, send for their harvestmen, who quickly reap and mow them down; and after these follow the binders, who stitch it up; from the field where it grew, it's caried to the Barn where it is threshed out; the good grain gathered into an heap, the chaff separated and burnt, or thrown to the dunghil, how bare and naked do the fields look after harvest which before were pleasant to behold? When the harvest men enter into the field, it is (to allude to that, *Joel* 2.3.)

before them, like the garden of *Eden*, and behind them a desolate wilderness; and in some places its usual to set fire to the dry stubble, when the corn is housed; which rages furiously, and covers it all with ashes.

APPLICATION.

THE Application of this, I find made to my hands, by Christ himself in *Mat.* 13. 38, 39. *The field is the world, the good seed are the Children of the kingdom, the tares are the children of the wicked one, the enemy that sowed them is the devil, the harvest is the end of the world, the reapers are the Angels.*

The field is the world; there both the godly and ungodly live and grow together, till they be both ripe, and then they shall both be reaped down by death; death is the Sickle that reaps down both. I will open this Allegory in the following particulars.

1. In a catching harvest, when the Husbandman sees the clouds begin to gather and grow black, he hurries in his corn with all possible haste, and houses day and night.

So doth God the great Husbandman, he hurries the Saints into their graves, when judgments are coming upon the world, *Isa.* 57. 1. *The righteous perish and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away; none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come. Methusalah* died the year before the the flood, *Austine* a little before the sacking of *Hippo*, *Pareus* just before the taking of *Heidleberge*, *Luther* a little before the Wars brake out in *Germany*; but what speak I of single Saints? Sometimes the Lord houses great numbers together, before some sweeping judgment comes. How many bright and glorious stars did set almost together, within the compass of a few years to the astonishment of many wise and tender hearts in *England*. I find some of them ranked in a Funeral *Elegy*.

The learned *Twisse* went first, (it was his right)
Then holy *Palmer*, *Burroughs*, *Levi*, *Gouge*, *White*,
Hill,

Hill, *Whitaker*, grave *Gataker* and *Strong*,
Perne, *Marshal*, *Robinson*, all gone along.
I have not nam'd them half, their only strife,
Hath been (of late) who should first part with life.
These few who yet survive, sick of this age
Long to have done their parts and leave the stage.

The Lord sees it better for them to be under ground than above ground; and therefore by a merciful providence sets them out of harms way.

2. Neither the corn, or tares, can possibly resist the sharp and keen Sickle, when it's applied to them by the reapers hand; neither can the godly or ungodly resist the stroke of death, when God inflicts it; *Eccles.* 8. 8. *No man can keep alive his own soul in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that War.* The frail body of man is as unable to withstand that stroke, as the weak reeds, or feeble stalks of corn are to resist the keen Sythe and sharp Sickle.

3. The reapers receive the wheat which they cut down, into their arms and bosom. Hence that expression, by way of imprecation upon the wicked, *Psal.* 129. 7. *Let them be as the grass upon the house top which withers before it grow up, wherewith the mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.* Such withered grass are the wicked, who are never taken into the reapers bosom; but as soon as Saints are cut down by death, they fall into the hands and bosoms of the Angels of God, who bear them in their arms and bosoms to God their father, *Luke* 16. 22. For look, as these blessed spirits did exceedingly rejoyce at their conversion, *Luke* 15. 10. and thought it no dishonour to minister to them whilst they stood in the field, *Heb.* 1. 14. So when they are cut down by death, they will rejoyce to be their convoy to heaven.

4. When the corn and weeds are reap'd or mowed down they shall never grow any more in that field; neither shall wee ever return to live an animal life any more after death, *Job* 7. 9, 10. *As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more, he shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.*

Lastly, (to come home to the particular object of this Chapter) the reapers are never sent to cut down the harvest till it be fully ripe; neither will God reap down Saints or sinners, till they be come to a maturity of grace or wickedness. Saints are not reap'd down till their grace be fully ripe, *Job* 5.26. *Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, as a shock of corn cometh in his season.* "Not that every godly man "in such a full old age (saith Mr. *Caryl* on the place) "but yet in one sense it is an universal truth, and ever fulfilled; "for whensoever they dye they dye in a good age; yea, "though they dye in the spring and flower of their youth, "they die in a good old age, (*i. e.*) they are ripe for death "when ever they die: When ever a godly man dies, it is "harvest time with him, though in a natural capacity he be "cut down while he is green, and cropt in the bud or blossom; yet in his spiritual capacity, he never dies before he "be ripe. God ripens his speedily, when he intends to take "them out of the world speedily; he can let out such warm "rayes and beams of his spirit upon them, as shall soon "maturate the seed of grace into a preparedness for glory.

The wicked also have their ripening time for hell, and judgement; God doth with much long suffering endure the vessels of wrath, prepared for destruction. Of their ripeness for judgement the scripture often speaks, *Gen.* 15. 16. *The sin of the* Amorites *is not yet full.* And of *Babylon*, it is said, *Jer.* 51. 13. *O thou that dwellest upon many waters, thine end is come and the measure of thy covetousness.*

'Tis worth remarking, that the measure of the sin, and the end of the sinner come together. So *Joel* 3. 13. *Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest of the earth is ripe, for the press is full, the fats overflow, for their wickedness is great.* Where note, sinners are not cut down till they be ripe and ready. Indeed they are never ripe for death, nor ready for the grave; that is, fit to die: yet they are always ripe for wrath, and ready for hell, before they die. Now as Husbandmen judge of the ripeness of their harvest, by the colour and hardness of the grain; so may we judge of the ripeness both of

Saints

Saints and sinners, for heaven or hell, by these following signs.

Three signs of the maturity of grace.

1. WHen the Corn is near ripe, it blows the head, and stoops lower than when it was green. When the people of God are near ripe for heaven, they grow more humble and self-denying, than in the days of their first profession. The longer a Saint grows in this world, the better he is still acquainted with his own heart, and his obligations to God; both which are very humbling things. *Paul* had one foot in heaven, when he called himself the chiefest of sinners, and least of Saints, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *Eph.* 3. 8. A Christian in the progress of his knowledge and grace, is like a vessel cast into the Sea, the more it fills the deeper it sinks. Those that went to study at *Athens* (saith *Plutarch*) at first coming, seemed to themselves to be wise men; afterwards, only lovers of wisdom, and after that, only rhetoricians, such as could speak of wisdom, but knew little of it, and last of all Ideots in their apprehensions; still with the increase of learning, laying aside their pride and arrogancy.

2. When harvest is nigh, the grain is more solid and pithy than ever it was before; green corn is soft and spungy, but ripe corn is substantial and weighty: So it is with Christians; the affections of a young Christian perhaps are more ferverous and sprightly, but those of a grown Christian are more judicious and solid; their love to Christ abounds more and more in all judgment, *Phil.* 1. 9. The limbs of a Child are more active and plyable, but as he grows up to a perfect state, the parts are more consolidated and firmly knit, The fingers of an old Musician are not so nimble, but he hath a more judicious ear in musick, than in his youth.

3. When Corn is dead ripe, it is apt to fall of its own accord to the ground, and there shed; whereby it doth as it were anticipate the harvestman, and calls upon him to put in the sickle. Not unlike to which are the lookings and longings, the

the groanings and hastenings of ready Christians to their expected glory; they hasten to the coming of the Lord, or as *Montanus* more fitly renders it, they hasten the coming of the Lord; (*i. e.*) they are urgent and instant in their desires and cries to hasten his coming; their desires sally forth to meet the Lord, they willingly take death by the hand; as the corn bends to the earth, so do these souls to heaven. This shews their harvest to be near.

Six signs of the maturity of Sin.

WHen sinners are even dead ripe for hell, these signs appear upon them, or by these at least, you may conclude those souls not to be far from wrath, upon whom they appear.

1. When conscience is wasted and grown past feeling, having no remorse for sin; when it ceases to check, reprove and smite for sin any more, the day of that sinner is at hand, his harvest is even come. The greatest violation of conscience is the greatest of sins; this was the case of the forlorn *Gentiles*, among whom Satan had such a plentiful harvest; the patience of God suffered them to grow till their consciences were grown seared and past feeling, *Eph.* 4. 19. When a member is so mortified, that if you lance and cut it never so much, no fresh blood, or quick flesh appears, nor doth the man feel any pain in all this, then it's time to cut it off.

2. When men give themselves over to the satisfaction of their lusts, to commit sin with greediness, then are they grown to a maturity of sin; when men have slipt the reins of conscience and rush headlong into all impiety, then the last sands of Gods patience are running down. Thus *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and the cities about them in like manner gave themselves over to wickedness and strange sins; and then justice quickly truss'd them up for example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

3. That man is even ripe for hell, that is become a contriver of

of sin, a designer, a student in wickedness; one would think it strange, that any may should set his invention on work, upon such a subject as sin is; that any should study to become a dexterous artist this way, and yet the scripture frequently speaks of such, *whose bellies prepare deceit*, Job 15.35. *who travel in pain to bring forth*, this deformed birth, *ver.* 20. *who wink with their eyes*, whilst plodding wickedness, as men use to do when they are most intent upon the study of any knotty problem, *Prov.* 6. 13. These have so much of hell already in them, that they are more than half in hell already.

He that of a forward Professor, is turn'd a bitter Persecutor, is also within a few rounds of the top of the ladder; 4. the contempt of their light, the Lord hath already punished upon them, in their obduracy and madness against the light. Reader, if thou be gone thus far, thou art almost gone beyond all hope of recovery. Towards other sinners, God usually exercises more patience, but with such he makes short work. When *Judas* turns Traitor to his Lord, he is quickly sent to his own place. Such as are again intangled and overcome of those lusts they once seemed to have clean escaped, these bring upon themselves swift damnation, and their Judgment lingers not, 2 *Pet.* 2. 3, 20.

He that can endure no reproof or controul in the way of 5. his sin, but derides all counsel, and like a strong current, rages at, and sweeps away all obstacles in his way, will quickly fall into the dead lake, *Prov.* 29. 1. *He that being often reproved hardneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.* This is a death spot, a hell spot, where ever it appears. From this very symptom the Prophet plainly predicted the approaching ruine of *Amaziah*, 2 *Chr.* 25. 26. *I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkned to my voice.* He that will not be timely *counselled*, shall be quickly *destroyed*.

Lastly, when a man comes to glory in his sin, and boast of his wickedness, then its time to cut him down; *whose end is destruction, whose glory is in their shame*, Phil. 3. 16. This is a braving, a daring of God to his face, and with whomsoever

ſoever he bears long, to be ſure, theſe are none of them.

You ſee now what are the ſigns of a full ripe ſinner; and when it comes to this, either with a Nation, or with a ſingle perſon, then ruine is near, *Joel* 3. 13. *Gen.* 15. 16. It is in the filling up of the meaſure of ſin, as in the filling of a veſſel caſt into the Sea, which rowls from ſide to ſide, taking in the water by little and little, till it be full, and then down it ſinks to the bottom. Mean while, admirable is divine patience, which bears with theſe veſſels of wrath, whilſt fitting for deſtruction.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The reflection of a growing Chriſtian.

CHear thy ſelf, O my ſoul! with the heart ſtrengthening bread of this divine Meditation. Let faith turn every drop of this truth into a ſoul reving cordial. God hath ſown the precious ſeed of Grace upon my ſoul, and though my heart hath been an unkind ſoil which hath kept it back and much hindred its growth; yet bleſſed be the Lord, it ſtill grows on, though by ſlow degrees; and from the ſpringing of the ſeed and ſhootings forth of thoſe gracious habits, I may conclude an approaching harveſt: Now is my ſalvation nearer than when I believed; every day I come nearer to my ſalvation, *Rom.* 13. 11. O that every day I were more active for the God of my ſalvation! grow on my ſoul, and add to thy faith vertue, to thy vertue knowledge, &c. Grow on from faith to faith; keep thy ſelf under the ripening influences of heavenly Ordinances; the faſter thou groweſt in grace, the ſooner thou ſhalt be reaped down in mercy, and bound up in the bundle of life, 1 *Sam.* 25, 29. I have not yet attained the meaſure and proportion of grace aſſigned to me, neither am I already perfect, but am reaching forth to the things before me, and preſſing towards the mark for the prize of my heavenly calling, *Phil.* 3. 12, 13. O mercy to be admired! that I who lately had one foot in hell, ſtand now with one foot in heaven!

But

But the case is far different with me, whilst others are ripening apace for heaven, I am withering; many a soul plowed up by conviction, and sowed by sanctification long after me, hath quite over-topt and out-grown me? my sweet and earthly blossoms were nipt and blown off, my bright morning overcast and clouded; had I kept on according to the rate of my first growth, I had either now been in heaven, or at least in the Suburbs of it on earth; but my graces wither and languish, my heart contracts and cools to heavenly things; the Sun and rain of ordinances and providences improve not graces; how sad therefore is the state of my soul?

2. The reflection of a decaying Christian.

Thy case, O declining Saint, is sad! but not like mine; thine is but a temporary remission of the acts of Grace, which is recoverable; but I am judicially hardning and *treasuring up to my self wrath, against the day of wrath*, Rom. 2. 5. Time was, when I had some tender sense of sin, when I could mourn and grieve for it, now I have none at all. My heart is grown stupid and sottish. Time was when I had some conscientious care of duty, and my heart would smite me for the neglect of it; but now none at all. Wretched soul! what wilt thou do? thou art gone far indeed, a few steps farther will put thee beyond hope; hitherto I stand in the field, the long-suffering God doth yet spare me; yea, spare me, whiles he hath cut down many of my companions in sin round about me. What doth this admirable patience, this long-suffering drawn out to a wonder, speak concerning me? Doth it not tell me, that the Lord is not willing I should perish, but rather come to repentance? 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. And what argument is like his pity and patience, to lead a soul to repentance? *Rom.* 2. 4. O that I may not frustrate at last, the end of a long suffering God! lest he proportion the degrees of his wrath, according to the length of his patience.

3. The reflection of a hardning sinner.

The *Poem.*

(1) Joh. 4 35. (2) Rev. 14. 15.

WHen fields are (1) white to harvest, forth you go
With Sith's and (2) Sickles; to reap down and mow.
Down go the laden ears, flat to the ground;
Which those that follow having stitcht and bound;
It's carted home unto the Barn, and so
The fields are rid; where lately corn did grow.
(3) Mat. 13. 38. This world's the (3) field, and they that dwell therein;
(4) *ibid.* The (4) Corn and (5) tares; which long have ripening been.
(5) *ibid.* Angels the (6) reapers, and the judgment day
(6) Mat. 13. 39. The time of (7) harvest when like corn and hay;
(7) *ibid.* The fading flower of (8) earthly glory must
(8) 2 Pet. 3. 10. Be mowed down, and level'd with the dust
(9) Mat. 13. 30. The (9) Barns are heaven and hell; the time draws nigh
(1) Rev. 1. 7. When through the darkned (1) clouds, and troubled skie
(2) 1 Thes. 4. 16. The Lord shall break, a dreadful (2) trumpet shall
Sound to the dead, the stars from heaven fall.
(3) 2 Pet. 3. 10. The rowling sphears with (3) horrid flames shall burn,
(4) Mat. 24. 30. And then the Tribes on earth shall (4) wail and mourn.
The judgement set, before Christs awful Throne
(5) 2 Cor. 5. 10. All flesh shall be (5) conven'd, and every one
Receive his doom: which done, the just shall be
(6) Mat. 13. 30. Bound in lifes bundle; (6) even as you see
The full ripe ears of wheat bound up, and born
In sheaves with joy; unto the owners Barn.
(7) *ibid.* This done, the Angels next in (7) bundles bind
The tares together, as they did combind
In acting sin, so now their lot must be
To burn together in one misery.
Drunkards with Drunkards pinion'd, shall be sent
(8) 1 Cor. 6. 9. To hell together in one (8) Regiment.
Adulterers and swearers there shall lye
In flames, among their old society.
(9) Mat. 13. 41. 42. O dreadful (9) howlings! O the hideous moans
Of fetter'd sinners! O the tears! the groans!

The

The doleful lamentations as they go
Chain'd fast together, to their place of wo.
The world thus clear'd, as fields when harvest's in,
Shall be no more a Stage for acting Sin.
With purifying flames (1) it shall be burn'd,
Its stately Fabricks into ashes turn'd.
Cease then my soul, to dote on or admire
This splendid world, which is reserv'd for fire.
Decline the company of sinners here,
As thou would'st not be shackel'd with them there.

(1) 2 Pet. 3. 10

CHAP. XVI.

Your Winter store in Summer you provide;
To Christian prudence this must be apply'd.

Upon the care of Husbandmen to provide for Winter.

OBSERVATION.

GOod Husbands are careful in Summer to provide for Winter, then they gather in their Winter store; food and fewel for themselves, and fodder for their cattle. *He that gathers in Summer is a wise Son, but he that sleeps in harvest is a Son that causes shame*, Prov. 10. 5. A well chosen season is the greatest advantage to any action, which as it is seldom found in haste, so it is often lost by delay. 'Tis a good Proverb which the frugal *Dutch* have among them: *Bonus Servatius, facit bonum Bonifacium*; a good Saver will make a good Benefactor. And 'tis a good Proverb of our own: He that neglects the occasion, the occasion will neglect him. Husbandmen know that Summer will not hold all the year, neither will they trust to the hopes of a mild and favourable Winter, but in season provide for the worst.

APPLICATION.

WHat excellent Chriſtians ſhould we be, were we but as provident and thoughtful for our ſouls? 'tis doubtleſs a lingular point of Chriſtian wiſdom, to foreſee a day of ſpiritual ſtraits and neceſſities, and during the day of grace to make proviſion for it. This great Goſpel truth is excellently ſhadowed forth in this natural Obſervation, which I ſhall branch out into theſe ſeven particulars.

1. Husbandmen know there is a change, and viciſſitude of ſeaſons and weather; though it be pleaſant Summer weather now, yet winter will tread upon the heels of Summer; Froſts, Snows, and great falls of rain muſt be expected. This alternate courſe of ſeaſons in nature is ſetled by a firm Law of the God of nature, to the end of the world, *Gen.* 8.22. *Whilſt the earth remaineth, ſeed time and harveſt, cold and heat, winter and ſummer, day and night, ſhall not ceaſe.*

And Chriſtians know, that there are changes in the right hand of the moſt High, in reference to the ſpiritual ſeaſons. If there be a *Spring time* of the Goſpel, there will alſo be an *Autumn*; if a day of *proſperity*, it will ſet in a night of *adverſity*; *for God hath ſet the one over againſt the other*, Eccleſ. 7. 14. In heaven there is a day of everlaſting ſerenity, in hell a night of perfect and endleſs horror and darkneſs; on earth, light and darkneſs take their turns, proſperity and adverſity, even to ſouls as well as bodies, ſucceed each other. If there be a Goſpel day, a day of grace now current, it will have its period and determination, *Gen.* 3. 6.

2. Common prudence and experience enables the Husbandman in the midſt of Summer, to foreſee a Winter, and provide for it before he feel it; yea natural inſtinct teaches this to the very birds of the air; and beaſts of the field.

And ſpiritual wiſdom ſhould teach Chriſtians to exerciſe their foreſeeing faculties, and not ſuffer them to feel evil before they fear it. But Oh the ſtupifying nature of ſin! Though the Stork in the Heavens knows her appointed time, and the Turtle, Crane and Swallow the time of their coming

ing, yet man, whom God hath made wiſer than the fowls of the air, in this, acts quite below them, *Jer.* 8.7.

3. The end of Gods ordaining a ſummer ſeaſon, and ſending warm and pleaſant weather, is to ripen the fruits of the earth, and give the Husbandman fit opportunity to gather them in.

And God's deſign in giving men a day of grace, is to furniſh them with an opportunity for the everlaſting happineſs and ſalvation of their ſouls, *Rev.* 2.21. *I gave her a ſpace to repent.* It is not a meer reprieval of the ſoul, or only a delay of the execution of the threatned wrath, though there be much mercy in that: but the peculiar aim of this patience and bounty of God, is to open for them a way to eſcape the wrath to come, *by leading them to repentance*, Rom. 2.4.

The Hubandman doth not find all harveſt ſeaſons alike favourable, ſometimes they have much fair weather, and meet with no hinderance in their buſineſs; other times 'tis a catching harveſt, but now and then a fair day, and then they muſt be nimble or all is loſt.

4. There is alſo great difference in Soul-ſeaſons, ſome have had a long and fair ſeaſon of grace; an hundred and twenty years did God wait upon the old world, in the Miniſtry of *Noah*. Long did God wait on the gainſaying *Iſraelites*, Iſa. 42.14. *I have a long time held my peace, I have been ſtill and reſtrained my ſelf.* Others have a ſhort and catching ſeaſon, all lies upon a day, upon a nick of time, *Acts* 17.30.

5. A proper ſeaſon neglected and loſt is irrecoverable. Many things in Husbandry muſt be done in their ſeaſon, or cannot be done at all for that year; if he plow not, and ſow not in the proper time, he loſes the harveſt of that year.

'Tis even ſo as to ſpiritual ſeaſons. Chriſt neglected, and grace deſpiſed, in the ſeaſon when God offers them, are irrecoverably loſt, *Prov.* 1.21. then (that is, when the ſeaſon is over) they ſhall call upon me but I will not hear. O, there is a great deal of time in a ſhort opportunity! that may be done or prevented, in an hour rightly timed, which cannot be done or prevented in a mans life-time afterwards. There was one reſolved to kill *Julius Cæſar*, ſuch a day; the night before

before, a friend sent him a letter to acquaint him with it, but he being at supper, and busie in discourse, said, to morrow is a new day, and indeed it was, *dies novissima*, his last day to him; whence it became a Proverb in *Greece*. *To morrow is a new day.* Our Glass runs in heaven, and we cannot see how much or little of the sand of God's patience is yet to run down; but this is certain, when that glass is run, there is nothing to be done for our souls, *Luke* 19. 42. *O that thou hadst known at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes.*

6. Those Husbandmen that are careful and laborious in the Summer, have the comfort and benefit of it in Winter; he that then provides fewel, may sit warm in his habitation when others blow their fingers. He that provides food for his family, and fodder for his cattle in the harvest, shall eat the fruit of it, and enjoy the comfort of his labours, when others shall be exposed to shifts and straits. And he that provides for eternity, and lays up for his soul a good foundation against the time to come, shall eat when others are hungry and sing when others howl; *Isa.* 65. 13. A day of death will come, and that will be a day of straits to all negligent souls; but then the diligent Christian shall enjoy the peace and comfort that shall flow in upon his heart, from his holy care and sincere diligence in duties? as 2 *Cor.* 1. 12. *This is our rejoycing, the testimony of our conscience, that in all sincerity and holy simplicity, we have had our conversation in this world.* So *Hezekiah*, 2 *Kings* 20. 3. *Remember now, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart.* A day of judgment will come, and then foolish Virgins, who neglected the season of getting oyl in their lamps, will be put to their shifts; then they come to the wise, and say, give us of your oyl, *Mat.* 25. 8, 9. but they have none to spare, and the season of buying is then over.

7. No wise Husbandman will neglect a fit opportunity of gathering in his hay and corn, upon a presumption of much fair weather to come; he will not say the weather is setled, and I need not trouble my self, though my corn and hay be fit for the house, yet I may get it in another time as well as now.

And

And no wise Christian will lose a present season for his soul, upon the hopes of much more time yet to come; but will rather say, now is my time, and know not what will be hereafter; hereafter I may wish to see one of the days of the Son of man, and not see it, *Luke* 17.22. 'Tis sad to hear how cunning some men are to dispute themselves out of heaven, as if the devil had hired them to pledge against their own souls; sometimes urging the example of those that were called at the eleventh hour, *Mat.* 20.6. and sometimes that of the penitent thief, But, O! to how little purpose is the former pleaded; they that were called at the eleventh hour were never called before, as these have been, no man had hired; that is, called or invited them to Christ, and for the thief, (as Mr. *Fenner* rightly observes) it was a singular and extraordinary example. It was done when Christ hang'd on the Cross, and was to be inaugurated; then Kings manifest such bounty, and pardon such crimes, as are never pardoned afterwards. Besides, God was then in a way of working miracles; then he rent the rocks, open'd the graves, raised the dead, and converted this thief; but God is now out of that way.

REFLECTIONS.

I. The careless souls reflection.

I Have indeed been a good Husband for the world; with what care and providence have I looked out for my self and family, to provide food to nourish them, and cloaths to defend them against the asperities of Winter? mean while neglecting to make provision for eternity, or take care for my soul. O my destitute soul? how much have I slighted and undervalued thee? I have taken more care for an horse or an ox, than for thee; a well stored barn, but an empty soul. Will it not shortly be with me, as with that careless Mother, who when her house was on fire, busily bestir'd her self to save the goods, but forgot the child? (though it were saved by another hand) and then minding her child, ran up and down like one distracted wringing her hands, and crying, O my child, my child! I have saved my goods, and lost my

my child, such will be the case of thee, my soul, *Mat.* 16. 26. Besides how easie will my conviction be at the Bar of Christ? will not my providence and care for the things of this life, leave me speechless and self-condemned in that day? What shall I answer when the Lord shall say, Thou couldst foresee a winter, and seasonably provide for it? yea, thou hadst so much care of thy very beasts to provide for their necessities, and why tookest thou no care for thy soul? was that only not worth the caring for?

2. The presumptuous souls Reflection.

Is it so dangerous to neglect a present proper season of grace? What then have I done, who have suffered many such seasons to die away in my hand, upon a groundless hope of future opportunities! Ah, deluded wretch! what if that supposition fail? where am I then? I am not Lord of time, neither am I sure, that he who is, will ever vouchsafe an hour of grace in old age, to him that hath neglected many such hours in youth; neither indeed is it ordinary for God so to do. 'Tis storied of *Caius Marius Victorius*, who lived about 300. years after Christ, and to his old age continued a *Pagan*, but at last being convinced of the Christian verity, he came to *Simplicianus* and told him he would be a Christian; but neither he nor the Church could believe it, it being so rare an example for any to be converted at his age: But at last seeing it was real, there was a shouting and gladness, and singing of Psalms in all Churches, the people crying out *Caius Marius Victorius* is become a Christian. This was written for a wonder, and what ground have I to think, that God will work such wonders for me, who have neglected his ordinary means of salvation?

3. The industrious souls Reflection.

Bless the Lord, O my soul! who gave thee a season, a day for eternal life, which is more than he hath done for thousands; yea, bless the Lord for giving thee an heart to understand and improve that season, I confess I have not improved it as I ought; yet, this I can (through mercy) say; that how ever it fare in future times, with my outward man, though I have no treasures or stores laid up on earth, or if I have, they are but corruptible, yet I have a blessed hope laid up in heaven, *Col.* 1. 5. I have bags that wax not old. Whilst

worldlings

worldlings rejoyce in their ſtores and heaps, I will rejoyce in theſe eternal treaſures.

The *Poem.*

OBſerve in Summers Sultry heat.
how in the (1) hotteſt day:
The Husbandman doth toyl and (2) ſweat,
about his Corn and Hay.

If then he ſhould not reap and mow,
and (3) gather in his ſtore;
How ſhould he live, when for the ſnow
he can't move out of door?

The little (4) Ants, and painful Bees;
by natures inſtinct led;
Theſe have their Summer granaries,
for winter furniſhed.

But thou my ſoul, whoſe Summers day
is almoſt paſt and gone;
What Soul-proviſion doſt thou (5) lay
in (6) ſtock to ſpend upon?

If (7) nature teacheth to prepare
for temporal life, much rather
Grace ſhould provoke to (8) greater care,
ſoul food in time to gather.

Days of affliction, and diſtreſs
are (9) haſting on apace,
If now I live in careleſneſs;
how ſad will be my caſe?

(1) Joh.7. 2.
(2) Gen. 3.19.
(3) Prov.10.5.
(4) Prov.6.6,7.
(5) Mat. 6.20.
(6) 1 Tim.6.19.
(7) Jer. 8. 7.
(8) Mat.16.26.
(9) Zeph.2.2,3.

(1) Isa. 32. 9.

Unworthy of the name (1) of man,
who for that soul of thine;
Wilt not do that which others can
do for their very kine.

Think frugal Farmers, when you see
Your mows of Corn and Hay;
(2) Luke 12. 18. 20. What a (2) conviction this will be
to you, another day.

Who ne're were up before the Sun,
nor break an hours rest;
For your poor souls, as you have done
so often, for a beast.

(3) 2 Cor. 4. 18.
(4) 1 Cor. 7. 31
(5) Prov. 23. 5.

Learn once to see the difference
betwixt (3) eternal things;
And these poor (4) transient things of sence;
that fly with (5) eagles wings.

CHAP. XVII.

Upon reaping the same we sow.

When from Tare seeds, you see choice wheat to grow,
Then from your lusts, may joy and comfort flow.

OBSERVATION.

GOD gives to every seed its own body, 1 *Cor.* 15. 38. At first he created every Tree and herb of the field, having its seed in its self, for the conservation of the *species*; and they all inviolably observe the Law of their Creation. fruits naturally rise out of the seed, and roots proper them. *Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles*

Such

Such productions would be monſtrous in nature; and although the juice or ſap of the earth be the common matter of all kind of fruits, yet it is ſpecificated according to the different ſorts of Plants and ſeeds it nouriſhes. Where wheat is ſown, it's turn'd into Wheat; in an apple Tree, it becomes an apple; and ſo in every ſort of Plants or ſeeds, it's concocted into fruit proper to the kind.

APPLICATION.

TRanſlate this into ſpirituals, and the propoſition ſhadowed forth by it, is fully expreſſed by the Apoſtle, *Gal.* 6. 7. *What a man ſows, that ſhall he reap; they that ſow to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; and they that ſow to the ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting.* And as ſure as the harveſt follows the ſeed-time, ſo ſure ſhall ſuch fruits and effects reſult from the ſeeds of ſuch actions. *He that ſoweth iniquity, ſhal reap vanity,* Prov. 22. 8. *And they that now go forth weeping, and bearing precious ſeed, ſhall doubtleſs come again rejoycing bringing their ſheaves with them,* Pſal. 126. 5. The ſum of all is this. That our preſent actions have the ſame reſpect and relation to future rewards and puniſhments, as the ſeeed we ſow in our fields, hath to the harveſt we reap from it. Every gracious action is the ſeed of joy, and every ſinful action the ſeed of anguiſh and ſorrow, to the ſoul that ſowed it. Two things are ſenſibly preſented to us in this ſimilitude.

That as the ſeed ſown, is preſently covered from our ſight under the clods, and for ſome time after we ſee no more of it, and yet at laſt it appears again, by which it's evident to us that it is not finally loſt: So our preſent actions, though *phyſically* tranſient, and perhaps forgotten, yet are not loſt, but after a time ſhall appear again in order to a retribution. 1.

If this were not ſo, all good and holy actions would be to the loſs of him that performed them. All the ſelf-denial, ſpending duties, and ſharp ſufferings of the people of God, would turn to their damage, though not in point of honeſty,

yet in point of personal utility; and then also, what difference would there be betwixt the actions of a man and a beast, with respect to future good or evil? yea, man would then be more feared and obeyed than God, and souls be swayed in all their motions, only by the influence of present things; and where then would Religion be found in the world? 'Tis an excellent note of *Drexelius*; "Our works "(saith he) do not pass away as soon as they are done, but as "seed sown, shall after a time rise up to all eternity; whatever we think, speak or do, once spoken, thought or done, is eternal, and abides for ever.

Drexlius de æternitate, prope fin

What *Zeuxes* the famous *Limner* said of his work, may be truly said of all our works; *Æternitati pingo*, I paint for eternity. O, how careful should men be of what they speak and do, whilst they are commanded so to speak, and so to do, as those that shall be judged by the perfect Law of Liberty, *Jam.* 2.12. What more transient than a vain word? and yet for such words, men shall give an account in the day of judgment. *Mat.* 12.36. That's the first thing; Actions like seed, shall rise and appear again in order to a retribution.

2. The other thing held forth in this similitude is, That according to the nature of our actions now, will be the fruit and reward of them then. Though the fruit or consequence of holy actions, for the present may seem bitter, and the fruit of sinful actions sweet and pleasant, yet there is nothing more certain, than that their future fruits shall be according to their present nature and quality, 2 *Cor.* 5.10. Then *Dionysius* shall retract that saying, *Ecce quam prospera navigatio a Deo datur sacrilegis*; Behold how God favours our sacrileges. Sometimes indeed (though but rarely) God causes sinners to reap in this world, the same that they have sown; as hath been their sin, such hath been their punishment. It was openly confessed by *Adonibezeck*, Judg 1.7. *As I have done, so hath God requited me.*

Socrates in his Church History furnishes us with a pertinent passage to this purpose, concerning *Valens* the *Emperor*, who was an *Arrian*, and a bitter persecutor of the Christians: This man, when eighty of the Orthodox Christians sailed from

from *Constantinople* to *Nicomedia*, to treat with him about the points of *Arrianism*, and to settle the matter by way of dispute; the *Emperor* hearing of their arrival, while they were yet in the Harbor, and not a man landed, caused the Ships to be fired wherein they were, and so consumed them all. Not long after, in his Wars against the *Goths*, he was overthrown; and hiding himself in a little Cottage, the enemy coming by, burnt it and him together. Thus this wretch reap'd what he sowed, burning for burning, the very same in kind paid him again; it is not always so in this world, but so it shall be in that to come; The table shall then be turned, and the Scene altered; for shall not the Judge of all the world do righteously? *Diogenes* was tempted to think, that God had cast off the Government of the world, when he saw the wicked prosper in their wickedness. On the same ground, many have been tempted to *Atheism*; but then the world shall see distributive justice shining out in its glory. *Tribulation, anguish and wrath, to every soul of man that doth evil; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good*, Rom. 2. 9, 10. Then 'twill appear what seed we sowed, what lives we lived; for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil, *Eccles.* 12. 14.

Cum vidto mala fata bonis, ignoscite quæso: solicitor nullos esse putare Deos. Ovid.

REFLECTIONS.

THis Meditation may be to me what the hand-writing upon the wall was to that prophane Prince, *Dan.* 5. 5, 6. and a like effect it should have upon me; for if all the actions of this life be seed sown for the next, Lord, what a crop, what a dreadful harvest am I like to have? how many oaths and curses, lyes and vain words, have I sown with my tongue how have I wronged, oppressed, and over-reached in my dealings? rushed into all prophaneness, drunkenness, uncleanness, Sabbath-breaking, &c. *as the horse rusheth into the battle*; and what shall I reap from such seed as this, but vengeance and fury? These sins seemed pleasant in the commission, but O, how bitter will they be in their account? *What shall*

1. The profane persons Reflection.

shall I do when God riseth up? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him? Job 31. 14. Is it not reasonable and just, (O my soul) that thou (hould'st eat the fruit of thine own planting, and reap what thou hast sown? I thought nothing but profit and pleasure would spring from my lusts, but now I see 'tis a root bearing gall and wormwood, *Deut.* 29. 18. Wretched soul, what shall I do? if these actions be not, then am I undone. I have been the author of mine own ruine, twisted an halter with mine own fingers, for the execution of mine own soul! O let me rather taste the bitterness of sin, by repentance now, than enjoy its present pleasures, which betrays the soul to endless wrath!

2. The moral mans reflection.

How have I also been deceived in this matter? I verily thought that glory and immortality would have been the fruit and product of my moral honesty and righteousness, that joy and peace had been seminally contained in those actions; but now I see such fruit can spring from no other root but special grace. Glory is disclosed from no other bud but holiness. Alas! all my planting and sowing was to little purpose, because I sowed not the right kind of seed; the best fruit I can expect from this, is but a lesser degree of damnation.

3. The holy souls Reflect on.

Deluded soul, thy seed is no better than what the *moral Heathens* sowed; and do I expect better fruit than what they reaped? Civility without Christ, is but a freer slavery; and Satan holds me as fast in captivity by this, as he doth the prophane by the pleasure of their lusts; either I must sow better seed, or look to reap bitter fruit.

Mean while, bless the Lord, (O my soul) who inabled thee to sow better seed! who kept thee watching, humbling thy self and praying, whilst others have been swearing, drinking and blaspheming. This will yield thee the fruit of joy in the world to come; yea, it already yields present peace to thy conscience. These revenues are better than Gold, sweeter than the honey, and the honey-comb; not that such fruits are meritoriously contained in these actions, I sow to my self in righteousness, but I reap in mercy, *Hos.* 10. 12. This is the way in which God will save and glorifie me. O then, let me

be

be ever abounding in the work of the word, knowing that my labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.

The *Poem.*

'Twould be a strange and monstrous thing to see
Cherries, or Plums grow on an Apple Tree.
Who ever gather'd from the (1) thistle Figs? (1) Mat. 7.16.
Or fruitful Grapes from off the worthless twigs
Of pricking thorns? in nature still we find
All its productions (2) answering to their kind. (2) Gen. 1.12.
As are the Plants we set, or seeds we sow;
Such is the (3) fruit we shake, and corn we mow. (3) Job 4. 7.
And canst thou think that from corruptions root,
Thy soul shall pluck the sweet and pleasant fruit
Of spiritual peace? who ever that was wise,
Abus'd himself with such (4) absurdities? (4) Jam. 1. 22.
Look what you sow, the very same you'l reap.
The fruit of what you plant, be sure you'l eat.
How are they (5) baffled by a subtil devil? (5) Gal. 6. 7.
That hope for heaven, whilst their ways are evil.
Such reasonings here their credulous souls beguile,
At which in other things, themselves would smile.
Our present acts though slightly passed by,
Are so much (6) seed, sown for eternity. (6) Gal. 6. 7.
The seeds of prayers, secret groans and tears;
Will shoot at last into the full blown ears,
Of peace and joy. (7) Blessed are they that sow (7) Psal. 126. 5.
Beside these waters; yea, thrice blest that go
Bearing such precious seed; though now they mourn,
With joyful sheaves, they shortly shall return.
Needs must the full ripe fruits in heaven be good,
When as the seed was glory in the bud.
But O, the (8) bitter, baneful fruits of sin! (8) Deut. 29. 18.
When all the (9) pleasure sinners have therein (9) Heb. 11. 25.

Like

Like faded bloſſoms to the ground ſhall fall,
Then they will taſte the wormwood and the gall.
What God and conſcience now of ſin report,
(1) Prov. 14. 9. You ſlight, and with their dreadful threatnings (1) ſport.
But he'l convince you then, your ways were naught,
(2) Judg. 8. 7. As *Gideon* the men of (2) *Succoth* taught.
If Sermons cannot, fire and brimſtone muſt
Teach men how good it is to pamper luſt.
(3) Mark 9. 44. When conſcience (3) takes thee by the throat and cries
Now wretch, now ſinner, thou that didſt deſpiſe
My warnings; learn, and ever learning be
That Leſſon, which thou ne're wouldſt learn of me.
The ſtouteſt ſinner then will houl and roar,
O ſin! I never ſaw thy face before.
Is this the fruit of ſin? Is this the place
Where I muſt lye? Is this indeed the caſe
Of my poor ſoul! muſt I be bound in chains
With theſe companions? Oh, is this the gains
I get by ſin! poor wretch, I that would never
See this before, am now undone for ever.

CHAP. XVIII.

Upon the joy of Harveſtmen

Great is the joy of Harveſt men, yet leſs
Than theirs, whom God doth with his favour bleſs.

OBSERVATION.

AMong all earthly joys, theſe four ſorts are noted in Scripture, as the moſt excellent and remarkable, (1) *Nuptial joys*, the day of Eſpouſals is the day of the gladneſs of a mans heart, *Cant.* 3. 11. (2) *The joy of Children.* Though now it ſeem but a common mercy to moſt, and a burden

burden to ſome; yet the people of God were wont to eſteem it a choice mercy, and rejoyced greatly in it, *John* 16. 21. there's joy that a man is born into the world. (3) *The joy of conqueſts* and victories, when men divide the ſpoyl. And laſtly, *The joy of Harveſt*; theſe two we find put together as principal matters of joy, *Iſa.* 9. 3. *They joy before thee, according to the joy in Harveſt, and as men rejoyce when they divide the ſpoil.* The joy of Harveſt is no ſmall joy; *Gaudium meſſis, eſt meſſis gaudii*, the joy of Harveſt is the Harveſt of their joy. 'Tis uſual with men, when they have reaped down their harveſt, (or cut the neck, as they uſe to call it) to demonſtrate their joy by ſhoutings, and loud acclamations.

APPLICATION.

THus, and unſpeakably more than thus, do Saints rejoyce and ſhout for joy, when they reap the favour and love of God, for which they laboured in many a weary duty. This joy of harveſt, as great as it is, and as much as carnal hearts are lifted up with it, is but a trifle, a thing of nought, compared with yours; after they have ſown to themſelves in righteouſneſs, and waited for the effects and returns of their duties with patience, and at laſt come to reap in mercy, either the full harveſt in heaven, or but the firſt fruits of it on earth, yet rejoyce, *with joy unſpeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. 1. 8. *This puts more gladneſs into their hearts, than when corn and wine increaſes*, Pſal. 4. 7. Carnal joys are but ſoul Feavers, the Agues of the inner-man; there is a great difference betwixt the unnatural inflammations of a feveriſh body which waſtes their ſpirits, and drinks up the radical moiſture, and that kindly well-tempered heat of an healthy body; and as much between the ſweet, ſerene and heavenly joys, which flow from the boſom of *Chriſt* into the hearts of believers, and thoſe earthly delights which carnal hearts in a ſenſual way ſuck out of creature-enjoyments. I will ſhew you the tranſcendency of ſpiritual joys, above the joy of harveſt, in theſe eight particulars following.

You that joy with the joy of harveſt, are glad, becauſe now

now you have food for your selves and families to live upon all the year; but the Christian rejoyceth, because he hath bread to eat, that the world knows not of, *Rev.* 2. 17. Christ is the food of his soul, and his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed, *Joh.* 5 55. (*i. e.*) the most real and excellent food. You read, *Psal.* 78. 25. that man did eat Angels food (*i. e.*) Manna, which was such excellent bread, that if Angels did live upon material food, this would be chosen for them; and yet this is but a type and dark shadow of *Jesus Christ*, the food of believers.

2. You rejoyce when your harvest is in, because corn is virtually many other things besides food, you can turn it into cloaths to keep you warm, and many other necessaries may be purchased by it: but yet it is not like Christ, the object of a Saints joy; though it answers many things, it doth not answer all things as Christ doth; turn it into what you will, it hath but a limited and respective usefulness: but Jesus Christ is all in all to believers, and out of him their faith can fetch all supplies; he is their health in sickness, their strength in weakness, their ease in pain, their honour in reproach, their wealth in poverty, their friend in friendlessness, their habitation when harbourless, their enlargement in bonds, the strength of their hearts, and life of their life. O he is a full Christ, and whatever excellencies are scattered among all the creatures, do meet all in him, and much more.

3. You rejoyce when you have gotten in your harvest, because now you can free those engagements, and pay those debts which you have contracted. Tis a comfort to be out of debt, and you may lawfully rejoyce that God gives you wherewith to quit your engagements, that you may owe no man any thing but love: but still the joy of harvest falls short of the joy of Saints; for you rejoyce that you are, or have wherewith to help your selves out of mens debts; but they rejoyce that they are out of Gods debt, that his book is cancelled, and their sins pardoned; that by reason of the imputed righteousness of Christ, the Law can demand nothing from them, *Rom.* 8. 1. Oh, what matter of joy is this?

1. You

You rejoyce, becauſe now your corn is out of danger, all the while it was abroad it was in hazard, but now it is houſed you fear not the rain. But Chriſtians rejoyce, not becauſe their Corn is ſafe, but becauſe their ſouls are ſo. All the while they abode in an unregenerate ſtate, they were every moment in danger of the ſtorms of wrath, but now being in Chriſt, that danger is over; and what compare is there betwixt the ſafety of a little corn, and the ſecurity of an immortal ſoul? 4.

Your joy is but in a gift of common providence. *Turks* and *Heathens* can rejoyce with your joy, but the joy of a Chriſtian is a peculiar favour and gift of God. Corn is given to all Nations, even the moſt barbarous and wicked have ſtore of it; but Chriſt is the portion but of a few, and thoſe the dearly beloved of God. *Luther* ſaid of the whole *Turkiſh Empire* (where is the beſt and greateſt ſtore of corn) that it is but a crumb which the great Maſter of the Family throws to the dogs. He that had more corn than his barns could hold, now wants a drop of water to cool his tongue. Chriſt is a gift beſtowed only upon Gods Elect. 5.

Your joy will have an end; the time is coming, that when you have reaped down your harveſts, your ſelves muſt be reaped down by death, and then you ſhall rejoyce in theſe things no more; but when your joy is ended, then is the joy of Saints perfected; they reap their harveſt, when you leave your harveſt: their conſolation is everlaſting. 6.

God can ſeparate your joy from theſe enjoyments, even while you have them, as well as when you leave them. 'Tis one thing for a man to have riches and full Barns, and another thing to have comfort in them, *Eccleſ.* 5. 19, 20. But now the joy of Chriſtians is a thing inſeparable from their enjoyment of Chriſt: Indeed the ſenſe of their intereſt may be loſt, and ſo the acts of their joy intermitted; but they always have it in the ſeed, if not in the fruit, *Pſal.* 97. 11. *Joy is ſown for the upright*; he hath it ſtill in the principle, and in the promiſe. 7.

The joy of Harveſt-men, for the moſt part, is only in their harveſt, and in ſuch earthly things; take that away, and their 8.

joy ceaſes. Earthly hearts are acquainted with no higher comforts; but the people of God can joy in him, and take comforts in their earthly injoyments too; and what comfort they take in theſe things, is much more refined and ſweet than yours; for they enjoy all theſe things in God, and his love in giving them, puts a ſweetneſs into them, that you are unacquainted with. Thus you ſee, how far your joy falls ſhort of theirs.

REFLECTION.

1. A Reflection for one that hath a full Barn but no Chriſt.

HOw have I rejoyced in a thing of nought, and pleaſed my ſelf with a vanity? God hath bleſſed me in my fields, and in my ſtores; but not with ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt. My Barns are full of corn, but my ſoul is empty of grace; common bounty hath given me a fulneſs of the things of this life, but what if the meaning of it ſhould be to fat me for the day of ſlaughter? what if this be the whole of my portion from the Lord? what if the language of his providences to my ſoul ſhould bē this? Lo, here I have given thee (with *Iſhmael*) the fatneſs of the earth: Thou ſhalt not ſay, but thou haſt taſted of thy Creator's Bounty; but make the moſt of it, for this is all that ever thou ſhalt have from me: There be others in the world, to whom I have denyed theſe things, but for them I have reſerved better; for the moſt part they are poor in this world, but rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom? Is not this enough to damp all my carnal mirth? Should my conſcience give me ſuch a *memento*, as *Abraham* in the parable gave to *Dives*; *Remember that thou in thy life time receivedſt thy good things.* Ah, what a cut would that be to all my comforts? A man in a Feaver hath a lively colour, but a dying heart. I have an appearance, a ſhadow of comfort, but a ſad ſtate of ſoul.

2. A Reflection for one that hath Chriſt but no Barn.

Bleſſed be the God and father of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who hath bleſſed me with all ſpiritual bleſſings in heavenly places in Chriſt Eph. 1.3. Though he hath not ſeen fit to give me much of this world in hand, yet it hath pleaſed him to ſettle a rich inhe-

inheritance upon me by promise; the hopes and expectations whereof, yield my soul more true comfort than all the present enjoyments of this world could have done. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given me my portion in this life, that by keeping me from the *injoyment*, hath also preserved me from the *snares* of a prosperous estate.

Lord Jesus, I have no bags, I have no Barns; but thou shalt be to me instead of all those things. When others rejoyce in the fulness of their earthly comforts, I will rejoyce in the fulness of my Christ; they have that which (though I have not) I shall not want; and I have that which all their riches cannot purchase. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

3. A Reflection for one that hath a full Barn and Christ too.

But Lord, how am I obliged, above thousands, to love and praise thee! to bless and admire thee, who hast not only plentifully provided for my soul, but for my body too! who hast given me both the upper and the neather springs, heaven and earth, things present, and things to come: Thou hast not dealt so with all, no, not with all thine own people; many of them are strangers to the mercies which I enjoy. God hath done great things for me; O my soul! what wilt thou do for God? the freer the condition is, he hath placed me in, the more am I both obliged and advantaged for his service; and yet I doubt it will be found, that many a poor Christian that labours with his hands to get his bread, redeems more hours for God than I do. Lord, make me wise to understand, and answer the double end of this gracious dispensation! Let me bestow the more of my time on God, and stand ready to Minister to the necessities of his people.

4. A Reflection for one that hath neither a Barn, nor a Christ.

Oh, what an unhappy wretch am I! that have nothing either in hand, or in hope; am miserable here, and like to be so for ever: Had I but an interest in Christ, as the godly poor have, that would sweeten all present troubles, and shew me the end of them. But alas! I am poor and wicked, contemned of men, and abhorred of God; an object of contempt, both to heaven and earth. Lord, look upon such a truly miserable object with compassion, give me a portion with thy people in the world to come, if thou never better

my

my outward condition here! O ſanctify this poverty! bleſs theſe ſtraits and wants, that they may neceſſitate my ſoul to go to Chriſt; make this poverty the way to glory, and I ſhall bleſs thee to eternity, that I was poor in this world.

The *Poem.*

OFt have I ſeen when harveſt's almoſt in,
The laſt load coming; how ſome men have bin
Rapt up with joy, as if that welcome cart
(1) Iſa. 9. 3. Drew home the very (1) treaſure of their heart.
What joyful ſhoutings! hooping! hollowing noiſe,
What mingled voices both of men and boys?
(2) Pſal. 4. 7. To carnal minds there is no (2) greater mirth,
No higher joy; nor greater heaven on earth,
He ſpeaks pure Paradoxes, that ſhall ſay
Theſe are but trifles; to what Saints enjoy.
(3) Prov. 29. 27 But they (3) deſpiſe your ſparks, as much as you
Contemn their Sun. Some that could never ſhew
(4) Luke 16. 20, 21. A full ſtuft (4) Barn, on which you ſet your heart;
But glean perhaps the ears behind your cart;
Yet are the gleanings of your comfort more,
Than all your harveſt, and admired ſtore.
(5) Job 20. 13. Your mirth is (5) mixt with ſorrow, theirs is pure
(6) Job 20. 5. Yours like a ſhadow (6) fleets, but theirs indure.
God gives to you the huſk, to them the pith;
(7) Prov. 10. 22 And no heart-ſtring-ſorrow (7) adds therewith.
Though at the gates of death they ſometimes mourn,
No ſooner doth the Lord to them return;
But ſorrow's baniſh'd from their penſive breaſt;
(8) Pſal. 42. 11 Joy triumphs there, (8) and ſmiles their cheeks inveſt.
Have you beheld when with perfumed wings,
Out of the balmy Eaſt bright *Phœbus* ſprings;
Mounting th' *Olympick* hill, with what a grace
He views the throne of darkneſs; and doth chaſe

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The ſhades of night before him? having hurl'd
His golden beams about this lower world,
How from ſad Groves, and ſolitary Cells
Where horrid darkneſs and confuſion dwells,
Batts, Owls, and doleful creatures fly away,
Reſigning to the cheerful birds of day,
Who in thoſe places now can ſit and chaunt,
Where lately ſuch ſad creatures kept their haunt.
Thus grief reſigns to joy, ſighs, groans and tears,
To ſongs triumphant when the Lord appears.
O matchleſs joy! O countenance divine!
What are thoſe trifles, to theſe ſmiles of thine!
May I with poor *Mephibosheth* be bleſt
With theſe ſweet ſmiles, let *Ziba* take the reſt.
My life, my treaſure, thou ſhalt ne'r be ſold
For ſilver hills, or rivers paved with gold.
Wer't thou but known to [illegible]ings, they would ſcorn,
To ſtoop their hearts to [illegible]r things as corn.
For ſo they do, becauſe [illegible]art above
That ſphere wherein their low conceptions move.

CHAP. XII.

More ſolid grain with greater ſtrength you thraſh,
The ableſt Chriſtians have the hardeſt laſh.

Upon the thraſhing of Corn.

OBSERVATION.

HUsbandmen having to do with divers ſorts of grain (ſome more tough and ſtubborn, others more free and tender) do not beat all alike in the threſhing floor; but as they have threſhals of ſeveral ſizes, ſo they beſtow on ſome grain more, on other fewer ſtrokes, according to the different qualities of the grain to be threſhed. This obſervation

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the Prophet *Iſaiah* hath *Chap.* 28. *v.* 27. *The Fitches are not threſhed with a threſhing inſtrument, neither is the Cart-wheel turned about upon the Cummin, but the Fitches are beaten out with a ſtaff, and the Cummin with a rod.* The manner of beating out the Corn in ancient times, was far different from that which is now in uſe among us; they had the Cart-wheel, which was full of iron ſpokes or teeth, and the hoofs of beaſts for the harder ſort of grain, as Wheat, Rye and Barley, a ſtaff or flail for the Fitches, and a rod or twig for the Cummin; all which inſtruments were proportioned according to the nature of the grain.

APPLICATION.

GOd having to do in a way of correction with divers ſorts of offenders, doth not uſe the like ſeverity with them all, but proportions his correction to their abilities and ſtrength, *Jer.* 30. 11. I will not make a full end of thee, but will [correct thee in meaſure] and will not leave thee altogether unpuniſhed, (*q. d.*) afflicted thou muſt be, my reſpect to my own glory and thy good, puts a neceſſity upon that; but yet I will do it moderately, I will not lay on without meaſure or mercy, as I intend to do upon the enemies; but will mete out your ſufferings in a due proportion, even as a careful Phyſician in preſcibing Pills and Potions to his Patients, hath regard as well to the ability of the Patient as to the nature and quality of the diſeaſe; even ſo thy God, O *Iſrael*, will not afflict thee according to the greatneſs of his power and his wrath; anſwerable thereunto, *Pſal.* 90. 11. that would break thee to pieces, *Pſal.* 78. 38. Nor yet will he afflict thee according to the demerit of thy ſin. As it ſhall be much leſs than what I could inflict; ſo it ſhall be leſs than thine iniquities deſerve, *Ezra* 9. 13. Neither my power, nor my deſert, ſhall be the rule of my proceedings; but I will do it with moderation and mercy, as thou art able to bear. I that have inſtructed the Husbandman to proportion his inſtruments to the quality of the grain before him, will exerciſe the like wiſdom and mildeſs towards thee,

and

thee, and the similitude betwixt the Husbandmans threshing his corn, and the Lords afflicting his people, stands in these particulars.

The Husbandmans end in threshing the corn, is to separate it from the husks and chaff; and Gods end in afflicting his people, is to separate them from their sins, *Isa.* 27. 9. In measure when it shooteth forth, he will debate with it, (*i. e.*) he will moderately correct them; and what the end of those corrections are, the next words inform us; *By this therefore shall the iniquity of* Jacob *be purged, and this is all the fruit to take away his sin.* God uses afflictions, as we use sope, to cleanse away filthiness, and to fetch out spots, *Dan.* 11. 35. he aims not at the destruction of their persons, but of their lusts. 1.

If the Husbandman have cockle, darnel, or pernicious tares before him in the floor among his corn, he little regards whether it be bruised and battered to pieces by the threshold or no; 'tis a worthless thing, and he spares it not. Such cockle and tares are the enemies of God; and when these come under the flail, he strikes them without mercy; for these, the Lord prepares a new sharp threshing instrument having teeth, which shall beat them to dust, *Isa.* 41. 15. *The daughter of* Babylon *is like a threshing floor; 'tis time to thresh her,* Jer. 51. 33. And when that time is come, then (in allusion to the Beast, that was to tread out the corn) *Sion's horn shall be of iron, and her hoofs brass,* Mich. 4. 13. He smites not his people, according to the stroke of them that smote them; the meaning is, his strokes on them shall be deadly strokes. They shewed no mercy to *Sion*, and God will shew no mercy to them. 2.

When the husks and chaff are perfectly separated from the grain; then the Husbandman beats it no more. When God hath perfectly purged and separated the sins of his People, then afflictions shall come to a perpetual end, he will never smite them again; there is no noise of the threshing instrument in heaven; he that beat them with his flail on earth, will put them into his bosom in heaven. 3.

Though the Husbandman lays on, and beats his corn, as 4.

if he were angry with it, yet he loves and highly prizes it, and though God strike and afflict his people, yet he sets a great value upon them? and it is equally absurd to infer, God's hatred to his people from his afflicting of them, as the Husbandmans hatred to his Corn, because he threshes and beats it, *Heb.* 12. 6. *Whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, and chasteneth every son whom he receiveth.*

5. Though the Husbandman thresh and beat the Corn, yet he will not bruise or hurt it if he can help it; though some require more and harder strokes than other, yet none shall have more than it can endure. And though the Lord afflict his Servants, yet he will do them no hurt, *Jer.* 25. 6. Some need more rods than others, but none shall have more than they can bear; the Lord knows the measures and degrees of his Servants faith and patience, and accordingly shall their trials be, *Psal.* 103. 13, 14. *Like as a father pities his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him; for he knows their frame, he remembers they are but dust; he makes a way to escape that they may be able to bear it,* 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. This care and tenderness of God over his afflicted, is evidently discovered in three particulars.

(1) In not exposing them to, till he have prepared them for their tryals, *Luke* 24. 49. *Tarry ye at* Jerusalem *until ye be endued with power from on High.* He gives them sometimes eminent discoveries of his Love immediately before, and as a preparative to their sufferings; in the strength whereof, they are carried through all.

(2) Or if not so, then he intermixeth supporting comfort with their troubles, as you sometimes see the Sun shine out while the rain falls. 'Twas so with *Paul*, *Acts* 27. 23. *This night* (and it was a sad night indeed) *there stood by me the Angel of the Lord, whose I am.*

(3) In taking off the affliction, when they can bear it no longer, 1 *Cor.* 10. 13. *He makes a way to escape, that they may be able to bear it.* Psal. 125. 3. The Rod is taken off, *when the righteous is even ready to put forth his hand to iniquity.* 'Tis a Jewish Proverb, When the bricks are doubled, then comes *Moses.* And it is a Christian experience, when the spirit is

ready

ready to fall, then comes Jesus; according to that promise *Isa.* 57. 16.

REFLECTIONS.

1. A Reflection for persecutors.

HOw unlike am I to God, in the afflicting of his people? The Lord is pitiful when he smites them, but I have been cruel. He is kind to them, when most severe; but the best of my kindnesses to them, may fitly enough be called severity. God smites them in love, I have smitten them in hatred. Ah, what have I done? God hath used me as his hand, *Psal.* 17. 14. or as his rod to afflict them, *Jer.* 10. 7. but his end and mine is widely differed in that action, *Isa.* 10. 7. I am but the Scullion, or rather the wisp to Scour and cleanse these vessels of glory, and when I have done that dirty work, those bright souls shall be set up in heaven, and I cast into the fire. If he shall have judgment without Mercy, that shewed no mercy; how can I expect mercy from the Lord, whose people I have persecuted mercilesly for his sake?

2. A Reflection for such as meet with no afflictions.

Is the Lords Wheat thus threshed in the floor of affliction? What then shall I think of my condition, who prosper and am let alone in the way of sin? surely the Lord looks on me as on a weed, and not as his corn; and 'tis too probable that I am rather reserved for burning, than threshing. Some there are whom God loves not so well as to spend one rod upon them, but saith, *Let them alone*, Hos. 4. 17. but miserable is their condition; notwithstanding their impunity; for what is the interpretation but this? I will come to a reckoning with them for altogether in hell. Lord, how much better is thy afflicting mercy, than thy sparing severity! Better is the condition of an afflicted child, than of a rejected bastard. *Heb.* 12. 7. O, let me rather feel thy rod now, as the rod of a loving father, than feel thy wrath hereafter, as the wrath of an omnipotent avenger.

A Reflection for an afflicted Saint.

Well then, despond not, O my soul, thou hearest the Husbandman loves his corn though he thresh it: and surely the Lord loveth thee not the less, because he afflicts thee so much

much. If affliction then be the way to heaven, blessed be God for affliction. The threshing strokes of God have come thick upon me, by which I may see what a tough and stubborn heart I have; if one word would have done the work, he would not have lifted up his hand the second time: I have not had a stroke more than I had need of, 1 *Pet.* 1. 6. and by this means he will purge my sin, blessed be God for that. The damned have infinitely more and harder strokes than I, and yet their sins shall never be separated by their sufferings. Ah, sin, cursed sin, I am so much out of love with thee, that I am willing to endure more than all this to be well rid of thee; all this I suffer for thy sake, but the time is coming when I shall be rid of sin and suffering together. Mean while I am under my own fathers hand, smite me he may, but hate me he cannot.

The *Poem.*

THe sacred records tell us, heretofore
God had an Altar in a (1) threshing floor;
Where threshing instruments devoted were
To sacred service, so you find them here.
I now would teach the thresher to beat forth,
A notion from the threshold much more worth
Than all his corn; and make him understand
That soul-instructing engine in his hand.
With fewer (2) strokes, and lighter you will beat
The oats and barley, than the stubborn wheat,
Which will require and endure more blows,
Than freer grain. Thus deals (3) the Lord by those
Whom he afflicts. He doth not use to strike
Offending children, with his rod alike.
But on the (4) ablest shoulders doth impose,
The heaviest burdens; and the (5) less on those

(1) 2 Sam. 24. 22.
(2) Isa. 28. 27.
(3) Isa. 27. 7, 8.
(4) Job. 1. 1, 12.
(5) Jer. 30. 11.

Or

Of weaker grace. He ſhews himſelf a God
Of judgment, in his handling of the rod.
God hath a (6) rate-book by him, wherein he
Keeps juſt accounts, how rich his people be;
What faith, experience, patience more or leſs
Each one poſſeſſeth, and doth them aſſeſs:
According to their ſtock. Such as have not.
A Martyrs *faith*, ſhall have no Martyrs *lot*.
The (7) kinds, degrees, and the continuance
Of all their ſufferings, to a circumſtance;
Preſcribed are by him who wiſely ſways
The world, (8) more than's right on no man layes.
Be man or devil the Apothecary,
God's the Phyſician; who can then miſcarry
In ſuch a hand? he never did, or will
Suffer the leaſt addition to his Bill.
Nor meaſure, nor yet mercy he obſerves
In threſhing (8) *Babylon*, for ſhe deſerves
His heavieſt ſtrokes; and in his floor ſhe muſt
Be beaten ſhortly with his flail to duſt.
But *Sion's* God (1) in meaſure will debate,
His children he may ſmite; but cannot hate.
He beats them, true, to make their chaff to flie;
That they like purged golden grains may lye
In one fair heap, with thoſe bleſs'd ſouls that here
Once in like manner thraſh'd, and winnowed were.

(6) Rev. 3. 8.

(7) Rev. 2. 10.

(8) Joh. 34:23

(9) Iſa. 41. 15

(1) Iſa. 27. 7.

CHAP. XX.

The fan doth cauſe light chaff to fly away,
So ſhall th'ungodly, in Gods winnowing day.

Upon the winnowing of corn.

OBSERVATION.

WHen the Corn is threſhed out in the floor; where it lyes mingled with empty ears, and worthleſs chaff, the

the Husbandman carries it out all together into some open place, where having spread his sheet for the preservation of the grain, he exposes it all to the wind; the good grain, by reason of its solidity, remains upon the sheet, but the chaff being light and empty, is partly carried quite away, by the wind, and all the rest separated from the good grain into a distinct heap; which is carried away, either to the fire or the dunghill, as a worthless thing.

APPLICATION.

MEn have their winnowing days, and God hath his; a day to separate the chaff from the wheat, the godly from the ungodly, who shall both be held up to the wind, but only the wicked shall be driven away by it. Such a day God hath in this world, wherein he winnows his wheat, and separates the chaff. There is a double fanning or winnowing of men here in this world; one is *doctrinally*, in which sense I understand that Scripture, *Mat.* 3. 12. spoken of Christ, when he was entring into his Ministerial work, *His fan is in his hand, and he shall throughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.* The preaching of the Gospel is as a fan in Christs hand, and it is as much as if *John* had thus told the *Jews*, that though there were many hypocritical ones among them, that had now a place and name among the people of God, and gloried in their Church-priviledges, yet there is a purging blast of truth coming, which shall make them fly out of the Church, as fast as chaff out of the floor. Thus Christ winnows or fans the word doctrinally: The other is *judicially*, by bringing sore and grievous tryals and sufferings upon the Churches, for this very end, that those which are but chaff, (*i. e.*) empty and vain Professors may by such winds as these, be separated from his people.

The Church increases two ways, and by two divers means *extensively*, in bredth and number, and *intensively*, in vigour and power; peace and prosperity causes the first, sufferings and adversity the last; and well may a day of persecution

secution be called a winnowing day, for then were the people of God tossed to purpose, as corn in the sieve, though nothing but chaff be lost thereby. Of such a winnowing day the Prophet speaks, *Amos* 9. 9, 10. *I will sift the house of Israel among all Nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth, all the sinners of my people shall die.* (*q. d.*) I will cause great agitations and tossings among you by the hands of the *Assyrians* and *Babylonians*, into whose Countreys you shall be dispersit and scattered, yet I will so govern those your dispersions by my providence, that not one good grain, one upright soul shall eternally perish; but the sinners of my people, the refuse stuff, that shall perish.

To the same purpose speaks another Prophet, *Zeph.* 2. 1, 2. *Gather your selves together*, (or as some read) *fan your selves*. yea, fan your selves, *before the decree bring forth, and the day pass as the chaff*. He doth not mean, that the time shall pass as the chaff, but there is a day of affliction and distress coming in which the wicked shall pass as the chaff before the wind; and yet notwithstanding all these winnowings upon earth, chaff will still abide among the Corn; therefore God hath appointed another day for the winnowing of the world, even the day of judgment, in reference to which it is said, *Psal.* 1. 4, 5. *The ungodly are not so, but are like the chaff which the wind drives away; therefore the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous*, (*i. e.*) God hath a day wherein he will sift the world like corn in a sieve, and then the wicked shall appear to be but chaff, which God will eternally separate from his wheat. I will not strain the similitude, but fairly display it in these seven particulars.

1. The chaff and wheat grow together in the same field, and upon the same root and stalk. In this, wicked men are like chaff, who not only associate with the people of God, but oftentimes spring up with them in the same families, and from the same root or immediate Parents, *Mal.* 1. 2. *was not Esau Jacobs brother?* yet the one was wheat, the other chaff. Instances of this are infinite.

The

2. The Husbandman would never endure the husks, chaff, and dry ſtalks to remain in the field, if it were not for the good corns ſake; he would quickly ſet fire on it, but that the corn is among it, which he highly prizeth; and be aſſured, God would never ſuffer the wicked to abide long in this world were it not for his own elect that were diſperſed among them. Except the Lord had ſuch a remnant diſperſed in the world, he would quickly ſet fire to the four quarters, and make it like *Sodom*, *Iſa.* 1. 9.

3. The chaff is a very worthleſs thing, the Husbandman cares not what becomes of it, and of as little worth are wicked men, *Prov.* 10. 20. *The heart of the wicked is little worth.* The heart is the principal part of the man, and yet that's but chaff; no worth in it; his lands, his clothes, &c. are worth ſomewhat, but his heart is worth nothing.

4. Though chaff in it ſelf be nothing worth, yet it is of ſome uſe to the corn; whiles 'tis ſtanding in the field; the ſtalk bears up the ear, and the chaff covers the grain, and defends it from the injury of the weather. Thus God makes wicked men of uſe to his people, in outward ſociety; they help to ſupport and protect them in this world, *Rev.* 12. 16. The earth helped the woman, (*i. e.*) worldly men for carnal ends helpt the Church, when a flood of perſecution was poured out. The Church often helps the world, it receives many benefits from the people of God; and ſometimes God overrules the world to help his church.

5. When the chaff and wheat are both brought forth and held up to the wind in one ſieve, they fall two ways; the wheat falls down upon the floor or ſheet, the chaff is carried quite away: So although for a time godly and ungodly abide together, yet when this winnowing time comes, Gods wheat ſhall be gathered into his garner in heaven, the chaff ſhall go the other way, *Mat.* 3. 12.

6. If there be any chaff among the corn, it will appear when it is ſifted in a windy day, it cannot poſſibly eſcape if it be well winnowed; much more impoſſible it is for any wicked man to eſcape the critical ſearch of God in that day? the cloſeſt hypocrite ſhall then be detected, for God will judge

judge the secrets of men, 2 *Cor.* 16. *He will then bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the heart*, 1 *Cor.* 4. 5.

Lastly, after corn and chaff are separated by the winnowing wind, they shall never lie together in one heap any more. The wicked shall see *Abraham*, and *Isaac*, and *Jacob* and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, but themselves thrust out; there is no chaff in heaven. 7.

REFLECTIONS.

AM I an empty vain professor, that want the pith and substance of real godliness, then am I but chaff in Gods account, though I grow among his corn; the eye of man cannot discern my hypocrisie, but when he comes, whose fan is in his hand, then how plainly will it be detected? Angels and men shall discern it, and say, *Lo, this is the man that made not God his hope*; how shall I abide the day of his coming? Christ is the great heart-Anatomist; things shall not be carried then, by names and parties, as they are now; every one shall be weighed in a just ballance, and a *Mene Tekel*, written upon every false heart; great will be the perspicuity of that trial, my own conscience shall joyn with my judge, and shall then acknowledge, that there is not one drop of injustice in all that Sea of wrath; and though I am damned, yet I am not wronged; the chaff cannot stand before the wind, nor I before the judgment of Christ. 1. A Reflection for a close Hypocrite.

Is there such a fanning time coming; why do not I then sift my heart every day, by serious self-examination? no work more important to me, and yet how much have I neglected it? O my soul! thou hadst been better imployed in searching thine own estate in reference to that day, than in prying sinfully into the hearts, and censuring the conditions of other men; judge thy self and thou shalt not be condemned with the world; the work indeed is difficult, but the neglect dangerous: were I within a few days to stand at mans Bar, there to be tried for my life, how busie should I be every hour of the day in writing to any that I thought could befriend 2. A Reflection for one that neglects self-examination.

befriend me? and studying every advantage to my self? and yet, what a vast difference is there between mans Bar and Gods? between a tryal for my life, and for my soul? Lord, rouze up my sluggish heart by awful and solicitous thoughts of that day, lest I be found among that chaff, which shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire!

3. A Reflection for a sincere soul.

Fear not, O my soul! though there be a blast coming which shall drive all the chaff into hell, yet it shall blow thee no harm. *I know that when he hath tryed me, I shall come forth as gold*, Job 23. 10. I confess I have too much chaff about me, but yet I am not altogether chaff? there is a solid work of grace upon my soul that will abide the trial: let the judgment to come be as impartial and exact as it is possible to be, yet a grain of sincerity cannot be lost in it: for *God will not cast away a perfect*, *i. e.* (an upright hearted) *man*, *Job* 8. 20. He that is appointed to judge the world is mine; and his imputed righteousness will make me full weight in the ballance. Bless the Lord (O my soul) for sincerity; this will abide, when common gifts and empty names will flee as the chaff before the wind.

The *Poem*.

(1) Psal. 35. 5. THe winnowing wind first (1) drives the chaff away,
Next light, and hollow grains; those only stay
Whose weight, and solid substance can indure
This trial, and such grains are counted pure.
(2) Mat. 3. 12. The corn for use (2) is carefully preserv'd.
(3) Mat. 3. 12. The useless chaff (3) for burning flames reserv'd
No wind but blows some good, a Proverb is,
Glad shall I be, if it hold true in this.
O, that the wind when you to winnowing go,
This spiritual good unto your souls might blow!
To make you pause, and sadly ruminate
In what a doleful plight and wretched state.

Their

Their ſouls are in, who cannot (4) hope to ſtand
When he ſhall come, whoſe (5) fan is in his hand.
His (6) piercing eyes infallibly diſcloſe,
The very reins, and (7) inward parts of thoſe
Whoſe outſide ſeeming grace ſo neatly paints,
That with the (8) beſt, they paſs for real Saints.
No hypocrite with God (9) acceptance finds,
But like the chaff diſpers'd by furious winds:
Their guilt ſhall not that ſearching day indure,
Nor they approach (1) th'aſſemblies of the pure.
Have you obſerv'd in Autumn, (2) thiſtle-down
By howling *Eurus* ſcatter'd up and down
About the fields? Even ſo Gods ireful ſtorm
Shall chaſe the hypocrite, who now can ſcorn
The breath of cloſe reproofs; and like a rock
Repel reproofs, and juſt reprovers mock.
How many that in (3) ſplendid garments walk
Of high profeſſions! and like Angels talk,
Shall God deveſt; and openly proclaim
Their ſecret guilt, to their eternal ſhame!
This is the day, wherein the Lord will rid
His Church of thoſe falſe friends, which now lie hid
Among his people. There will not be one
False heart remain, to loſe our love upon.
O bleſs'd aſſembly! glorious ſtate! when all
In their uprightneſs walk, and ever ſhall.
O make my heart ſincere, that I may never
Prove ſuch light chaff as then thy wind will ſever
From ſolid grain! O let my ſoul deteſt
Unſoundneſs? and abide thy ſtricteſt teſt.

(4) Pſal. 1. 5.
(5) Mat. 3 12
(6) Rev. 1. 14.
(7) 1 Cor. 4. 5.
(8) Mat. 7. 22.
(9) Job 13. 16
(1) Pſal. 1. 5.
(2) Iſa. 17. 13.
(3) Mat. 23. 7.

An Introduction

TO THE

Second PART

OF

HUSBANDRY

HOw is it reader? have I tired thee? (with me.
Whilst through these pleasant fields thou walk'st
Our path was pleasant, but if length of way
Do weary thee, we'l slack our pace, and stay;
Let's sit a while under the cooling Shade
Of fragrant trees; Trees were for shadow made.
Lo here a pleasant grove, whose shade is good;
But more than so, 'twill yield us fruit for food;
No dangerous fruits do on these branches grow,
No snakes among the verdant grass below.
Here we'l repose a while, and then go view
The pleasant herds and flocks: and so adieu,

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Upon the ingrafting of fruit trees.

Ungrafted trees can never bear good fruit,
Nor we till grafted on a better root.

OBSERVATION.

A Wild tree naturally springing up in the wood or hedge, and never grafted or removed from its native soyl, may bear some fruit, and that fair and pleasant to the eye, but it will give you no content at all in eating, being always harsh, sowr and unpleasant to the taste; but if such a stock be removed into a good soyl, and grafted with a better kind, it may become a good tree, and yield store of choice and pleasant fruit.

APPLICATION.

UNregenerate men who never were acquainted with the mystery of spiritual union with Jesus Christ, but still grow upon their natural root, old *Adam*, may by the force and power of natural principles bring forth some fruit, which (like the wild hedge fruit we speak of) may indeed be fair and pleasant to the eyes of men, but God takes no pleasure at all in it; it is sowr, harsh, and distastful to him, because it springs not from the spirit of Christ, *Isa.* 1. 13. *I cannot away with it, it is iniquity*, &c. but that I may not intangle the thred of my discourse, I shall (as in the former Chapters) set before you a parallel betwixt the best fruits of natural men, and those of a wild ungrafted tree.

The root that bears this wild fruit is a degenerate root, and that is the cause of all this sowrness and harshness in the fruit it bears; it is the seed of some better tree accidentally blown, or cast into some waste and bad soyl, where not being manured

manured and ordered aright, it is turned wild: So all the fruits of unregenerate men flow from the first *Adam*, a corrupt and degenerate root; he was indeed planted a right seed, but soon turned a wild and degenerate plant; he being the root from which every man naturally flows, corrupts all the fruit that any man bears from him. It is observed by *Gregory*, pertinent to my present purpose, *Genus humanum in parente primo, velut in radice putruit*; Mankind was putrefied in the root of his first Parent, *Mat.* 7. 18 *A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.*

This corrupt root spoils the fruit, by the transmission of its sowr and naughty sap into all the branches and fruits that grow on them; they suck no other nourishment, but what the root affords them, and that being bad, spoils all: for the same cause and reason, no meer natural or unregenerate man can ever do one holy or acceptable action, because the corruption of the root is in all those actions. The necessity of our drawing corruption into all our actions, from this cursed root *Adam*, is expressed by a quick and smart Interrogation, *Job* 14. 4. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.* The sense of it is well delivered us (by Mr. *Caryl in loc.*) This question (saith he) may undergo a threefold construction; First, thus: Who can bring a morally clean person out of a person originally unclean? and so he layes his hand upon his birth-sin: Or, Secondly, (which speaks to my purpose) it may refer to the action of the same man, man being unclean, cannot bring forth a clean thing; (*i. e.*) a clean or holy action; that which is originated, is like its Original. And that this sowr sap of the first stock (I mean *Adams* sin) is transmitted into all mankind, not only corrupting their fruit, but ruining and withering all the branches; the *Apostle* shews us in that excellent parallel betwixt the two *Adams*, Rom. 5. 12. *Wherefore as by one man* [one, not only *in individuo, sed in specie*, one representing the whole root or stock, *sin entred into the world*] not by imitation only, but by propagation? and this brought death and ruin upon all the branches. 2.

Although these wild hedge-fruits be unwholsom and unpleasant 3.

pleasant to the taste, yet they are fair and beautiful to the eye; a man that looks upon them, and doth not know what fruit it is, would judge it by its shew and colour to be excellent fruit; for it makes a fairer shew oftentimes, than the best and most wholsom fruit doth: Even so, those natural gifts and endowments which some uregenerate persons have, seem exceeding fair to the eye, and a fruit to be desired. What excellent qualities have some meer natural men and women? What a winning affability? humble condescention, meekness, righteousness, ingenious tenderness and sweetness of nature! As it was (hyperbolically enough) said of one, *In hoc homine, non peccavit Adam*; *Adam* never sinned in this man; meaning, that he excelled the generality of *Adams* children in sweetness of temper and natural endowments. What curious phantasies, nimble wits, solid judgments, tenacious memories, rare elocution, &c. are to be found among meer natural men? by which they are assisted in discourling, praying, preaching and writing, to the admiration of such as know them! but that which is highly esteemed of men, is abomination to God, *Luke* 16. 15. it finds no acceptance with him, because it springs from that cursed root of nature and is not the production of his own spirit.

4. If such a stock were removed into a better soyl, and grafted with a better kind, it might bring forth fruit pleasant and grateful to the Husbandman; and if such persons (before described) were but regenerated and changed in their spirits and principles, what excellent and useful persons would they be in the Church of God? and then their fruits would be sweet and acceptable to him. One observes of *Tertullian*, *Origen*, and *Jerome*, that they came into *Canaan*, laden with *Egyptian* gold, (*i. e.*) they came into the Church full of excellent human learning, which did Christ much service.

5. When the Husbandman cuts down his woods or hedges, he cuts down these Crab-stocks with the rest, because he values them not any more than the thorns and brambles among which they grow; and as little will God regard or spare these natural branches, how much soever they are laden with such fruit. The threatning is universal, *John* 3. 3. *Except you*

be

be regenerate and born again, you cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. And again, *Heb.* 12.14. *Without holiness, no man* (be his natural gifts never so excellent) *shall see God.* Imbellished nature, is nature still; *That which is born of the flesh, is but flesh,* however it be set off with advantage to the eye of man.

REFLECTIONS.

I. A Reflection for an accomplished Naturalist.

TO what purpose then do I glory in my natural accomplishments? Though I have a better nature than some others have, yet it is a cursed nature still. These sweet qualities and excellent gifts, do only hide, but not kill the corruption of nature. I am but a rotten post guilded over, and all my duties but hedge-fruit, which God makes no account of. O cutting thought! that the unlearned shall rise and take heaven, when I with all my excellent gifts shall descend into hell. Heaven was not made for Scholars, as such, but for believers; as one said, when they comforted him upon his death-bed, that he was a knowing man, a *Doctor of Divinity*: O, said he, I shall not appear before God as a *Doctor*, but as a man; I shall stand upon a level with the most illiterate, in the day of Judgment; what doth it avail me that I have a nimble wit, whilst I have none to do my self good? Will my Judge be charmed with a rhetorical tongue? Things will not be carried in that world, as they are in this. If I could with *Berengarius* discourse *de omni scibili*, of every thing that is knowable; or with *Solomon* unravel nature from the *Cedar* to the *Hyssop*, what would this advantage me, as long as I am ignorant of *Christ*, and the mystery of Regeneration? My head hath often ake with study, but when did my heart ake for sin? Methinks, O my soul, thou trimmest up thy self in these natural ornaments to appear before God, much as that delicate *Agag* did, when he was to come before *Samuel*, and fondly conceitest that these things will procure favour, or (at least) pity from him? But yet, think not for all that, *the bitterness of death is past*; say not within thy self, Will God cast such a one as I into hell? Shall a man of such

parts be damned? Alas! juſtice will hew thee to pieces, as *Samuel* did that ſpruce King, and not abate thee the leaſt, for theſe things; many thouſand branches of nature, as fair and fruitful as thy ſelf, are now blazing in hell, becauſe not tranſplanted by regeneration into *Chriſt*; and if he ſpared not them neither will he ſpare thee.

2. A reflection for a true, but weak believer.

I am a poor deſpiſed Shrub, which have no beauty at all in me, and yet ſuch a one hath the Lord choſen to tranſplant into *Chriſt*, whilſt he left many fragrant branches ſtanding on their native ſtock, to be fewel of his wrath to all eternity! O grace for ever to be admired! Ah, what cauſe have I to be thankful to free grace, and for ever to walk humbly with my God: the Lord hath therefore choſen an unlikely, rugged, unpoliſht creature as I am, that pride may for ever be hid from mine eyes, and that I may never glory in his preſence, 1 *Cor.* 1. 29. I now have the advantage of a better root and ſoyl than any carnal perſon hath, it will therefore be a greater ſhame to me, and a reproach to the root that bears me, if I ſhould be out-ſtript and excelled by them; yet Lord, how often do I find it ſo? I ſee ſome of them meek and patient, whilſt I am proud and paſſionate; gentle and affable, whilſt I am rough and ſurly; generous and noble, whilſt I am baſe and penurious. Truly, ſuch a branch as I am, is no honour to the root that bears it.

The Poem.

(1) 1 Cor. 10. 45.
(2) Eccl. 7. 9.
(3) Deut. 32. 8.
(4) Rom. 5. 12.

I Am a branch of that fair *Eden* Tree
Which to (1) mankind God had ordain'd to be
The common ſtock, his (2) ſcituation good,
His (3) branches many, of himſelf a wood.
And like a Cedar by the River fed,
Unto the clouds his ample branches ſpread.
Sin ſmote (4) his root, then juſtice cut him down;
And level'd with the earth his lofty Crown.

What

What hope of branches, when the (5) tree's o'return'd?
But like (6) dry faggots to be bound and burn'd.
It had been ſo, had not (7) tranſcendent love,
Which in a ſphere above our thoughts doth move
Prepar'd a better (8) ſtock, to ſave and nouriſh
Tranſplanted twigs, which in him thrive and flouriſh.
In *Adam* all are (9) curs'd, no ſaving fruit
Shall ever ſpring from that ſin-blaſted root.
Yea all the branches that in him are found,
How (1) flouriſhing ſoever muſt be bound
And pil'd together, horrid news to tell!
To make an everlaſting blaze in hell.
God takes no pleaſure in the ſweeteſt bud
Diſclos'd by nature, for the root's not good.
Some (2) boughs indeed richly adorned are
With natural fruits, which to the eye are fair,
Rare (3) Gifts, ſweet diſpoſitions, which attracts
The love of thouſands, and from moſt exacts
Honour, and Admiration. You'l admire
That ſuch as theſe, are fewel for the fire.
Indeed ten thouſand pities 'tis to ſee
Such lovely creatures in this caſe to be.
Did they by true regeneration draw
The ſap of life from *Jeſſes* root, (4) the Law,
By which they now to wrath condemned are
Would ceaſe to curſe, and God ſuch buds would ſpare.
But out of him, there's none of theſe can move
His unrelenting heart, or draw his love.
Then cut me off, from this accurſed Tree;
Leſt I for ever be cut off from thee.

(5) Rom. 5. 18.
(6) Joh. 15. 6.
(7) Joh. 3. 16.
(8) 1 Cor. 15. 47.
(9) Gal. 3. 10.
(1) Heb. 12. 14.
(2) Mark 10. 20, 21.
(3) Heb. 6. 4, 5.
(4) Rom. 1. 2.

CHAP. II.

Upon the union of the graff with the ſtock

When ere you bud or graft, therein you ſee;
How Chriſt, and ſouls muſt here united be.

OBSERVATION.

WHen the Husbandman hath prepared his graffs in the ſeaſon of the year, he carries them, with the tools that are neceſſary for that work, to the tree or ſtock he intends to ingraft; and having cut off the top of the limb, in ſome ſtrait ſmooth part, he cleaves it with his knife or chiſſel, a little beſide the pith; knocks in his wedge to keep it open, then (having prepared the graff, he carefully ſets it into the cleft, joyning the inner ſide of the barks of graff and ſtock together, (there being the main current of the ſap) then puls out his wedge, binds both together (as in barking) and clays it up, to defend the tender graff and wounded ſtock from the injuries of the Sun and Rain.

Theſe tender cyences quickly take hold of the ſtock, and having immediate coalition with it, drink in its ſap, concoct it into their own nouriſhment, thrive better, and bear more and better fruits than ever they would have done upon their natural root, yea, the ſmalleſt bud, being carefully inoculated and bound cloſe to the ſtock, will in ſhort time become a flouriſhing and frutful limb.

APPLICATION.

THis carries a moſt ſweet and lively reſemblance of the ſouls union with Chriſt by faith; and indeed there is nothing in nature that ſhadows forth this great Goſpel-myſtery like it: 'Tis a thouſand pities, that any who are imployed about, or are but ſpectators of ſuch an action, ſhould terminate their thoughts (as too many do) in that natural object

object, and not raise up their hearts to these heavenly meditations, which it so fairly offers them.

When a twig is to be ingrafted, or a bud inoculated, it is first cut off by a keen knife from the Tree on which it naturally grew.

And when the Lord intends to graft a soul into Christ, the first work about it is cutting work, *Acts* 2. 37. their hearts were cut by conviction and deep compunction; no cyence is ingrafted without cutting, no soul is united with Christ without a cutting sense of sin and misery, *John* 16. 8, 9. 1.

When the tender shoot is cut off from the Tree, there are (ordinarily) many more left behind upon the same Tree, as promising and as vigorous as that which is taken; but it pleaseth the Husbandman to chuse this, and leave them. 2.

Even so it is in the removing or transplanting of a soul by conversion, it leaves many behind it in the state of nature, as likely and promising as it self; but so it pleaseth God to take this soul, and leave many others; yea, often such as grew upon the same root; I mean, the immediate parent, *Mal.* 1. 2. *was not* Esau Jacob's *brother*, (*saith the Lord*) *yet I loved* Jacob, *and I hated* Esau.

When the graffs are cut off, in order to this work, 'tis a critical season with them; if they lye too long before they are ingrafted, or take not with the stock, they dye, and are never more to be recovered; they may stand in the stock a while, but are no part of the Tree. 3.

So when souls are under a work of conviction, it is a critical season with them; many a one have I known then to miscarry, and never recovered again; they have indeed for a time stood like dead graffs in the stock, by an external dead-hearted profession, but never came to any thing; and as such dead graffs either fall off from the stock, or moulder away upon it, so do these, 1 *John* 2. 19.

The Husbandman when he hath cut off graffs, or tender buds, makes all the convenient speed he can to close them with the stock; the sooner that is done, the better; they get no good by remaining as they are. And truly it concerns the servants of the Lord who are imployed in this work, of 4.

ingrafting

ingrafting souls into Christ, to make all the haste they can, to bring the convicted sinner to a closure with Christ. As soon as ever the trembling Jaylor cryed out, *What shall I do to be saved? Paul* and *Silas* immediately direct him to *Christ*, Act. 16. 30, 31. They do not say, it is too soon for thee to act faith on *Christ*, thou art not yet humbled enough, but believe in the Lord *Jesus Christ*, *and thou shalt be saved.*

5. There must be an incision made in the stock before any bud can be inoculated, or the stock must be cut and cleaved, before the cyence can be ingrafted according to that in the Poet. *Venerit insitio, fac ramum ramus adoptet.* (*i. e.*)

To grafts, no living sap the stocks impart;
Unless you wound, and cut them neer the heart.

Such an incision or wound was made upon *Christ*, in order to our ingrafting into him, *John* 19. 34. the opening of that deadly wound gives life to the souls of believers.

6. The graff is intimately united, and closely conjoyned with the stock, the conjunction is so close, that they become one Tree.

There is also a most close and immediate union betwixt Christ, and the soul that believeth in him. It is emphatically expressed by the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 6. 17. *He that is joyned to the Lord, is one spirit.* The word imports, the neerest, closest and strictest union. *Christ* and the soul cleave together in a blessed oneness, as those things do that are glewed one to another; so that, look as the graff is really in the stock, and the spirit or sap of the stock is really in the graff, so a believer is really (though mystically) in *Christ*; and the Spirit of *Christ* is really communicated to a believer. *I live*, saith *Paul*, *yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*, Gal. 2. 20. *He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him*, 1 John 4. 16.

7. Graffs are bound to the stock, by bonds made of hay or flags; these keep it steddy, else the wind would loose it out of the stock.

The believing soul is also fastned to Christ, by bands which will secure it from all danger of being loosed off from him any more. There are two bonds of this union; the Spirit on Gods part, this is the firm bond of union, without which

which we could never be made one with Christ, *Rom.* 8. 9. *If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*; and *faith* on our part, *Eph.* 3. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.* These hold strongly.

Though the stock be one and the same, yet all graffs do not thrive and flourish alike in it, some out-grow the rest; and those that grow not so well as the others do, the fault is in them, and not in the stock: So it is with Souls really united to *Christ*; all do not flourish alike in him, the faith of some grows exceedingly, 2 *Thes.* 1. 3. the things that be in others are ready to dye, *Rev.* 3. 2. and such souls must charge the fault upon themselves. *Christ* sends up living sap enough not only to make all that are in him living, but fruitful branches. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

IS it so indeed betwixt *Christ* and my soul, as it is betwixt the ingraffed cyence and the stock? what honour and glory then hath Christ conferred upon me, a poor unworthy creature? What! to be made one with him, to be a living branch of him, to be joyned thus to the Lord. Oh! what a preferment is this! it is but a little while since I was a wild and curſed plant, growing in the wilderness amongst them that shall shortly be cut down and faggotted up for hell, for me to be taken from amongst them, and planted into Christ, O my soul! fall down and kiss the feet of free grace, that moved so freely towards so vile a creature! the dignities and honours of the Kings and Nobles of the earth, are nothing to mine; 'twas truly confessed by one of them, that it is a greater honour to be a member of Christ, than the head of an Empire. Do I say, a greater honour than is put upon the Kings of the Earth? I might have said, it is a greater honour than is put upon the Angels of heaven? for to which of them said Christ at any time, thou art bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh? *Behold! what manner of love is this!* 1 Joh. 3. 1. 1 Four comfortable Reflections for a regenerate soul.

Look again upon the ingraffed cyences, O my soul! and thou shalt find, that when once they had taken hold of the stock, 2.

ſtock, they live as long as there is any ſap in the root; and becauſe he liveth, I ſhall live alſo, for my life is hid with Chriſt in God, *Col.* 3. 3. The graff is preſerved in the ſtock, and my ſoul is even ſo, *preſerved in Chriſt Jeſus*, Jude 1.

3. Am I joyned to the Lord as myſtical part, or branch of him; how dear art thou then, O my ſoul, to the God and father of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt? What! a branch of his dear Son! What can God with-hold from one ſo ingrafted? *Eph.* 1. 6. *All is yours* (ſaith my God) *for ye are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods*, 1 *Cor.* 3. 23.

4. Once more, draw matter of inſtruction, as well as comfort from this ſweet obſervation. Seeing God hath put all this honour upon thee, by this moſt intimate union with his Chriſt, look to it (my ſoul) that thou live and walk as becomes a ſoul, thus one with the Lord; be thou tender over his glory, doth not that which ſtrikes at the root, ſtrike at the very life of the graff? and ſhall not that which ſtrikes at the very glory of Chriſt tenderly touch and affect thee? yea, be thou tenderly affected with all the reproaches that fall upon him from abroad, but eſpecially with thoſe which redound to him from thine own unfruitfulneſs, O, diſgrace not the root that bears thee; let it never be ſaid; that any evil fruit ſhall be found upon a branch that lives and is fed upon ſuch a root.

The Poem.

OH what conſidering ſerious man can ſee
The cloſe conjunction of the graff and tree;
And whilſt he contemplates he doth not find
This meditation graffed on his mind?

(1) Joh. 15. 5. I am the (1) branch, and Chriſt the vine.
thy gracious hand did pluck
(2) Rom. 11. 17. Me from that native (2) ſtock of mine,
that I his ſap might ſuck.

The

The bloudy (3) ſpear did in his heart
a deep inciſion make,
That grace to me he might impart,
and I thereof partake. (3) Joh. 19.34.

The ſpirit (4) and faith is that firm band,
which binds us faſt together;
Thus we are claſped (5) hand in hand;
and (6) nothing us can ſever. (4) Rom. 8. 9. Eph. 3. 17. (5) Cant. 2. 16. (6) Rom 8.35.

Bleſs'd be that hand which did remove,
me from my native place,
This was the (7) wonder of thy love;
the triumph of thy grace. (7) 1 Joh. 3. 1.

That I a wild (8) and curſed plant,
ſhould thus preferred be;
Who all thoſe (6) ornaments do want,
thou may'ſt in others ſee. (8) Rom. 11. 17 (9) Mat. 11. 25.

As long as er'e the root doth live,
the branches are not dry;
Whilſt Chriſt hath grace, and life to give;
my ſoul can never (1) dye. (1) Joh. 14. 19

O bleſſed Saviour! never could
a graff cleave to the tree,
More (2) cloſe than thy poor creature would
united be with thee. (2) Cant. 8. 6.

My ſoul, diſhonour not thy root,
'twill be a ſhame for thee;
To want the choiceſt ſorts of fruit
and yet thus graffed (3) be. (3) Iſa. 5. 4.

Thus you may ſhake from graffs before they blow
More precious fruit than e're on trees did grow.

CHAP. III.

Upon the gathering of fruits in Autumn.

When Trees are ſhak'd, but little fruit remains;
Juſt ſuch a remnant to the Lord pertains.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a pleaſant ſight in Autumn, to ſee the fruitful branches hanging full of cluſters, which weigh the boughs to the ground.

Aſpice curvatos pomorum pondere ramos,
Ut ſua quod peperit vix ferat arbor onus.
Which I may thus Engliſh,
O what a pleaſant ſight it is to ſee,
The fruitful cluſters bowing down the tree.

But theſe laden branches are ſoon eaſed of their burden, for as ſoon as they are ripe, the Husbandman aſcends the tree, and ſhaking the limbs with all his might, cauſes a fruitful ſhower to fall like hailſtones upon the ground below, which being gathered to a heap, are carried to the pound, broken all to pieces in the trough, and ſqueezed to a dry lump in the preſs, whence all their juice and moiſture runs into the Fat. How few eſcape this Fat, of all thoſe multitudes that grew in the Orchard? If you now look upon the Trees, you may poſſibly ſee here one, and there another, two or three upon the outmoſt branches, but nothing in compariſon to the vaſt numbers that are thus uſed.

APPLICATION.

THis ſmall remains of fruit, which are either left upon the tree, or gathered in for an hoard, do well reſemble that ſmall number of Gods elect in the world, which free grace

grace hath reſerved out of the general ruine of mankind. Four things are excellently ſhadowed forth to us by this ſimilitude.

1. You ſee in a fruitful Autumn, the trees even oppreſt and overladen with the weight of their own fruits before the ſhaking time comes, and then they are eaſed of their burden. Thus the whole creation groans under the weight of their ſins who inhabit it, *Rom.* 8. 22. the creatures are in bondage, and by an elegant *Proſopopeia*, are ſaid, both to groan and wait for deliverance. The original ſin of man brought an original curſe, which burdens the creature, *Gen.* 3. 17. *Curſed is the ground for thy ſake*; and the actual ſin of man brings actual curſes upon the creature, *Pſal.* 107. 34. Thus the inhabitants of the world load and burden it, as the limbs of a tree are burdened, and ſometimes broken with the weight of their own fruit.

2. You may obſerve it in your Orchards every year, what abundance of fruits daily fall, either by ſtorms, or of their own accord; but when the ſhaking time comes, then the ground is covered all over with fruit. Thus it is with the world, that myſtical tree, with reſpect to men, that inhabit it; there is not a year, day or hour, in which ſome drop not, as it were of their own accord by a [illegible] death; and ſometimes wars and epidemical plagues blow down thouſands together into their graves, theſe are as high winds in a fruitful Orchard, but when the ſhaking time, the Autumn of the world comes; then all its inhabitants ſhall be ſhaken down together, either by death, or a tranſlation equivolent thereunto.

3. When fruits are ſhaken down from their trees, then the Husbandman ſeparates them; the far greateſt part for the pound, and ſome few he reſerves for a hoard, which are brought to his table, and eaten with pleaſure. This excellently ſhadows forth that great ſeparation, which Chriſt will make in the end of the world; when ſome ſhall be caſt into the wine-preſs of the *Almighties* wrath, and others preſerved for glory.

Thoſe fruits which are preſerved on the tree, or in the

hoard, are comparatively but an handful to thoſe that are broken in the pound. Alaſs! 'tis ſcarce one of a thouſand, and ſuch a ſmall remnant of Elect ſouls hath God reſerved for glory.

I look upon the World, as a great Tree, conſiſting of four large limbs or branches; this branch or diviſion of it on which we grow, hath doubtleſs a greater number of Gods elect upon it, than the other three; and yet when I look with a ſerious and conſidering eye upon this fruitful *European* branch, and ſee how much rotten and withered fruit there grows upon it, it makes me ſay as *Chryſoſtom* did of his populous *Antioch*, Ah, how ſmall a remnant hath *Jeſus Chriſt* among theſe vaſt numbers! *Many* indeed *are called*, but, ah, *how few are choſen*! Mat. 20. 16. Alas! they are but as the gleanings when the vintage is done; here and there one upon its outmoſt branches. To allude to that, *Iſa.* 17. 6. it was a ſad obſervation which that ſearching Scholar (Mr. *Brierwood*) long ſince made upon the world, that dividing it into thirty equal parts, he found no leſs than nineteen of them wholly overſpred with Idolatry and Heatheniſh darkneſs! and of the eleven remaining parts, no leſs than ſix are *Mahumetans*; ſo that there remain but five of thirty, which profeſs the Chriſtian Religion at large; and the far greater part of theſe remaining five, are invellop'd and drowned in Popiſh darkneſs; ſo that you ſee the reformed *Proteſtant Religion* is confined to a ſmall ſpot of ground indeed. Now, if from theſe we ſubſtract all the groſly ignorant, openly profane, meerly civil, and ſecretly hypocritical; judge then in your ſelves, how ſmall a ſcantling of the world falls to Chriſts ſhare!

Well might Chriſt ſay, *Mat.* 7. 14. *Narrow is the way, and ſtrait is the gate, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* And again, *Luke* 12. 13. *Fear not, little, little flock.* The large piece goes to the devil, a little remnant is Chriſts, *Rom.* 9. 27. Saints in Scripture are called *jewels*, Mal. 3. 17. Precious Pearls and Diamonds, which the Latines call *Uniones. Quia nulli duo ſimul reperiuntur* (ſaith *Pliny*) becauſe nature gives them not by pairs, but one by one. How many pebbles

pebbles to one pearl? Suitable to this notion, is that complaint of the Prophet, *Mich.* 7. 1, 2. *Wo is me, for I am as when they have gathered the Summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat; my soul desired the first ripe fruits; the good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none,* (*i. e.* none comparatively) *upright among men.* The *Prophet* alludes to a poor hungry man, that after the gathering time is past, comes into an Orchard, desiring some choice fruits to eat, but alas! he finds none; there is no cluster; possibly here and there a single Saint, like a single apple, here and there one after the shaking time. True Saints are the worlds rarities.

REFLECTIONS.

1. A Reflection for one that follows the example of the multitude.

VVHat then will be my lot, when that great shaking time shall come, who have followed the multitude, and gone with the tyde of the world? how even when I have been pressed to strictness and singular diligence in the matters of salvation, and told what a narrow way the way of life is, have I put it off with this; If it be so, then wo to thousands. Ah foolish heart! thousands and ten thousands shall be woful and miserable indeed, to all eternity. Will it be any mitigation to my misery, that I shall have thousands of miserable companions with me in hell? or will it be admitted for a good plea at the Judgment seat, Lord, I did as the generality of my neighbours in the world did; except it were here and there a more precise person, I saw none, but lived as I lived. Ah, foolish sinner! Is it not better go to heaven alone, than to hell with company? the worst courses, have always the most imitators, and the road to destruction is thronged with passengers.

2. A Reflection for an abuser of mercy.

And how little better is my condition? who have often fathered the wickedness of my own heart, upon the incouragements of mercy. Thus hath my heart pleaded against strictness and duty. God is a merciful God, and will not be so severe with the world as to damn so many thousands as are in my condition: deluded soul, if God had damned the whole race

race of *Adam*, he had done them no wrong; yea, there is more mercy in ſaving but one man, than there is ſeverity and rigour in damning all: how many drunkards and adulterers have lived and died with thy plea in their mouths? *God is a merciful God*; but yet his word expreſly ſaith, *Be ye not deceived, ſuch ſhall not inherit the Kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. 6. 9. God indeed, is a God of infinite mercy; but he will never exerciſe his mercy to the prejudice of his truth.

I. A Reflection for an elect ſoul.

O, what rich grace is here! that in a general Shipwrack mercy ſhould caſt forth a line or plank to ſave me! that when millions periſh, I with a few more ſhould eſcape that perdition. Was it the Fathers good pleaſure to beſtow the Kingdom upon a little flock, and to make me one of that number? What ſingular obligations hath mercy put upon my ſoul! the fewer are ſaved, the more cauſe have they that are, to admire their Saviour! If but one of a thouſand had been damned, yet my ſalvation would have been an act of infinite grace; but when ſcarce one of a thouſand are ſaved, what ſhall I call that grace, that caſt my lot among them!

The *Poem*.

HE that with ſpiritual eyes in Autumn ſees
The heaps of fruit which fall from ſhaken trees;
Like ſtorms of hailſtones; and can hardly find
One of a thouſand that remains behind.
Methinks this Meditation ſhould awake
His ſoul; and make it like thoſe trees to ſhake
Of all the cluſters which ſo lately grew
Upon theſe trees, how few can they now ſhew?
(1) Iſa. 17. 6. Here one (1) and there another; two or three
Upon the outmoſt branches of the tree.
The greateſt numbers to the pound are born,
Squeez'd in the trough; and all to pieces torn:

This

This little handful's left, to shadow forth
To me God's (2) remnant in this peopl'd earth. (2) Rom. 9 27.
If o're the whole terrestrial globe I look,
The Gospel visits but (2) a little nook. (3) 1 Joh. 5. 19
The rest with horrid (4) darkness overspread, Psal. 147. 20.
Are fast a sleep; yea, in transgressions dead. (4) Psal. 74. 20.
Whole droves to hell the devil daily drives;
Not one amongst them once (5) resists or strives. (5) 2 Tim. 2. 26
And in this little heaven-inlightned spot,
How vast an interest hath Satan got?
But few of holiness profession make,
And if from those that do profess I take
The self-deluding hypocrite, I fear
To think how few (6) remain that are sincere. (6) Mat. 7. 14.
O tax not mercy that it saves so few,
But rather wonder that the Lord should shew
Mercy to any; (7) quarrel not with grace, (7) Rom. 9. 27
But for thy self Gods gracious terms imbrace
When all were (8) shipwrack'd, thou shouldst wonder more (7) Rom. 5. 15
To find thy self so strangely cast ashore
And there to meet with any that can tell
How narrowly they also (9) scap'd from hell. (9) 1 Per. 4. 8.
The smaller numbers mercy saves, the higher
Ingagements lye on thee (1) still to admire. (1) Joh. 14. 22.
Had the whole *speciees* perish'd in their sin,
And not one individual saved bin;
Yet every (2) tongue before him must be mute, (2) Rom. 9. 18.
Confess his righteousness; but not dispute.
Or had the hand of mercy which is (3) free (3) Rom. 5. 15.
Taken another, and pass'd over me;
I still must justifie him, and my tongue
Confess my maker had done me no wrong.
But if my (4) name he please to let me see (4) Heb. 12. 23.
Enroll'd among those few that saved be,
What admiration should such mercy move!
What thanks, and (5) praise, and everlasting love! (5) Rev. 1. 5, 6.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Upon the cutting down of dead trees.

Dead barren Trees you for the fire prepare,
In ſuch a caſe, all fruitleſs perſons are.

OBSERVATION.

AFter many years patience, in the uſe of all means to recover a fruit Tree, if the Husbandman ſee it be quite dead, and that there can be no more expectation of any fruit from it, he brings his ax and hews it down by the root; and from the Orchard it is carried to the fire, it being then fit for nothing elſe; he reckons it imprudent to let ſuch a uſeleſs tree abide in good ground, where another might be planted in its room, that will better pay for the ground it ſtands in. I my ſelf once ſaw a large Orchard of fair, but fruitleſs trees, all rooted up, rived abroad, and ricked up for the fire.

APPLICATION.

THus deals the Lord by uſeleſs and barren Profeſſors who do but cumber his ground, *Mat.* 3.10. *And now alſo, the ax is laid to the root of the trees; therefore every tree that brings not forth good fruit, is hewn down and caſt into the fire.* And *Luke* 13.7. *Then ſaid the dreſſer of the vineyard, behold this three years I came ſeeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none; cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground?* Theſe three years, alluding to the time of his Miniſtry, he being at that time entring upon his laſt half year, as one obſerves, by harmonizing the Evangeliſts; ſo long he had waited for the fruit of his Miniſtry, among thoſe dead-hearted *Jews*: now his patience is even at an end, cut them down (ſaith he) why cumber they the ground? I will plant others, (*viz.* the *Gentiles*) in their

their room. This hewing down of the barren tree doth in a lively manner shadow forth Gods judicial proceedings against formal and empty Professors under the Gospel; and the resemblance clearly holds in these following particulars.

1. The tree that is to be hewn down for the fire, stands in the Orchard among other flourishing trees, where it hath enjoyed the benefit of a good soyl, a strong fence and much culture; but being barren, these priviledges secure it not from the fire. It is not our standing in the visible Church, by a powerless profession among real Saints, with whom we have been associated, and enjoyed the rich and excellent waterings of Ordinances, that can secure us from the wrath of God, *Mat.* 3. 8, 9. *Bring forth fruits meet for repentance, and think not to say within your selves, we have* Abraham *to our father.* Neither *Abraham*, nor *Abrahams* God, will acknowledge such degenerate children; if *Abrahams* faith be not in your *hearts*, it will be no advantage that *Abrahams* blood runs in your *veins*. 'Twill be a poor plea for *Judas*, when he shall stand before *Christ* in judgment, to say, Lord, I was one of thy family, I preached for thee, I did eat and drink in thy presence. Let these Scriptures be consulted, *Mat.* 7. 22. *Mat.* 25. 11, 12. *Rom.* 2. 17. *ad* 25.

2. The Husbandman doth not presently cut down the tree because it puts not forth as soon as other trees do, but waits as long as there is any hope, and then cuts it down. Thus doth God wait upon barren dead-hearted persons, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and from year to year; for the Lord is long-suffering to us-ward, and not willing that any should perish, but all come to repentance, 2 *Pet.* 3. 9. Thus the long-suffering of God waited in the days of *Noah* upon those dry trees, who are now smoaking and flaming in hell, 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. He waits long on sinners, but keeps exact accounts of every year and day of his patience, *Luke* 13. 7. *These three years*, And *Jer.* 25. 3. These 23 years.

3. When the time is come to cut it down, the dead tree cannot possibly resist the stroke of the ax, but receives the blow, and falls before it. No more can the stoutest sinner resist the fatal stroke of death, by which the Lord hews him

down, *Eccles.* 8. 8. *There is no man that hath power over the Spirit, to retain the Spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death, and there is no discharge in that war.* When the pale horse comes, away you must into the Land of darkness; Though thou cry out with *Adrian*, O my poor soul, whither art thou going! dye thou must, thou barren Professor; though it were better for thee to do any thing else than to die. What a dreadful screech will thy conscience give, when it sees the ax at thy root! and say to thee, as it is, *Ezek.* 7. 6. *An end is come, the end is come; it watcheth for thee, behold it is come.* O, said *Henry Beauford*, (that rich and wretched Cardinal, Bishop of *Winchester*, and Chancellor of *England*, when he perceived whereto he must) wherefore must I die? If the whole Realm would save my life, I am able either by policy to get it, or by riches to buy it. Fye (quoth he) will not death be hired? will riches do nothing? No, neither riches nor policy can then avail.

4. That side to which the tree leaned most while it stood, that way it will fall when it is cut down; and as it falls so it lies, whether to the South or North, *Eccles.* 11. 3. So it fares with these mystical trees; I mean fruitless Professors. Had their hearts and affections inclined and bended heavenward whilst they lived, that way no doubt they had fallen at their death; but as their hearts inclined to sin, and ever bended to the world; so when God gives the fatal stroke; they must fall hell-ward, and wrath-ward; and how dreadful will such a fall be?

5. When the dead tree is carried out of the Orchard, it shall never be among the living trees of the Orchard any more; many years it grew among them, but now it shall never have a place therein again. And when the barren Professor is carried out of the world by death, he shall never be associated with the Saints any more. He may then say, fare well all ye Saints, among whom I lived, and with whom I so often heard, fasted, prayed. I shall never see your faces more, *Mat.* 8. 11, 12. I say unto you, that many shall come from the East and West, and North, and South, and shall sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, in the Kingdom of heaven; but the

the children of the Kingdom shall be cast forth into outer darkness, there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

When the dead tree is carried out of the Orchard, the Husbandman cuts off his branches, and rives him asunder with his wedges. This also is the lot of barren Professors. *The Lord of that servant shall come in a day, when he looked not for him, and will cut him asunder*; he shall be dissected, or cut abroad, *Luke* 12.46. 6.

Now therefore consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear (or rend) you in pieces, *Psal.* 50.22. O direful day! when the same hand that planted, pruned, and watered thee so long, and so tenderly, shall now strike mortal strokes at thee, and that without pity: *For he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour*, Isa. 27.11. For the day of mercy is over, and the day of his wrath is fully come.

When this tree is cleav'd abroad, then it's rotten, hollow inside appears, which was the cause of its barrenness. It looked like a fair and sound bodied tree, but now all may see how rotten it is at the heart: So will God in that day, when he shall dissect the barren Professor, discover the rottenness of his heart, and unsoundness of his principles and ends; then they who never suspected him before, shall see what a hollow and rotten hearted Professor he was. 7.

Lastly, the fruitless tree is cast into the fire. This also is the end and sad issue of formality, *John* 15.6. *He is cast forth as a branch, and is withered, and men gather them and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.* This is an undoubted truth, That there is no plant in Gods vineyard, but he will have glory from it by bearing fruit, or glory on it by burning in the fire. In this fire shall they lye, *gnashing their teeth*, *Luke* 13.38. and that both in indignation against the Saints, whom they shall see in glory, and against *Jesus Christ*, who would not save them; and against themselves, for losing so foolishly the opportunities of salvation. Do you behold when you sit by the fire, the froth that boyls out of those flaming logs? O think of that fome and rage of these un- 8.

done creatures, foaming and gnashing their teeth in that fire which is not quenched, *Mark* 9. 44.

REFLECTION.

A Reflection for a formal Hypocrite.

HOw often have I passed by such barren trees, with a more barren heart? as little thinking such a tree to be the emblem of my self, as *Nebuchadnezzar* did, when he saw that tree in a dream which represented himself, and shadowed forth to him his ensuing misery, *Dan.* 4. 13. But, Oh my conscience! my drousie, sleepy conscience! wert thou but tender and faithful to me, thou wouldst make as round and terrible an application of such a spectacle to me as the faithful Prophet did to him, *v.* 22. And thus wouldst thou, O my soul, bemoan thy condition!

Poor wretch, here I grow for a little time, among the trees of righteousness, the Plants of renown; but I am none of them, I was never planted a right seed? some green and flourishing leaves of provision indeed I have, which deceive others, but God cannot be deceived; he sees I am fruitless and rotten at the heart. Poor soul, what will thine end be but burning! behold the ax lyeth by thy root, and wonder it is, that there it should lye so long, and I yet standing! still mercy pleads for a fruitless creature; Lord, spare it one year longer. Alas! he need strike no great blow to ruine me, his very breath blows to destruction, *Job* 4. 9. a frown of his face can blast and ruine me, *Psal.* 80. 6. he is daily sollicited by his justice to hew me down, and yet I stand. Lord, cure my barrenness; I know thou hadst rather see fruit, than fire upon me.

The

The *Poem.*

IF after pains and patience, you can see
No hopes of fruit (1) down goes the barren tree:
You will not suffer trees that are unsound,
And barren too, to cumber useful ground. (1) Luke 13.7.
The fatal ax is (2) laid unto the root
It's fit for fire, when unfit for fruit. (2) Mat. 3.10.
But though this be a dead, and barren tree;
Reader, I would not have it so to thee.
May it to thee this serious thought suggest,
In all the Orchard this dead tree's the best,
Think on it sadly, lay it close to heart;
This is the case in which thou wast, or art.
If so thou wast, but (3) now dost live and grow,
And bring forth fruit, what praise, and thanks dost ow } (3) Eph. 2. 1.
To that wise Husbandman that made thee so!
O think when justice lifted up its hand,
How (4) mercy did then interceding stand! John 15. 1.
How pity did on thy behalf appear,
To beg reprieval for another year. (4) Luke 13.8.
Stop Lord, forbear him; all hope is not past,
He can but be for fire at the last.
Though many Sermons, many a gracious call
He hath resisted like a brazen wall.
The next (5) may win him, then thy grace shall raise
Unto it self a (6) monument of praise. (5) Rom. 2.4.
How should this meditation thaw and melt (6) Luke 15.7.
The heart of him that hath such mercy felt.
But if thou still remain a barren tree,
Then here as in a mirror; thou may'st see,
Thy wretched state, when justice at a blow,
Requites Gods patience in thine overthrow.
And canst thou (7) bear it? can thy heart indure
To think of everlasting burnings? sure (7) Psal. 96. 7.
This must thy lot, thy fearful portion be;
If thou continue still a barren tree.

AN

The Poem.

[illegible]
[illegible]
You will not [illegible] (1) [illegible] (2) Luke 13.7.
And barren too, to cumber useful ground.
The fatal axis (3) laid into [illegible]
[illegible] (3) Mat. 3.10.
But [illegible] dead, and [illegible]
Braden, I would not have [illegible]
May it to thee this [illegible]
In all the Orchard this dead [illegible]
This [illegible]
This is the [illegible]
If [illegible] (5) now [illegible] and grow,
And bring forth fruit, what pains, and thanks do I ow (5) Eph. 2.1.
To that wise Husbandman that made thee so!
O think when justice lifted up its hand, John 15.1.
How (4) mercy did then interceding stand!
How pity did on thy behalf appear,
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The heart of him that hath such mercy felt.
But if thou still remain a barren tree,
Then here as in a mirror; thou may'st see,
Thy wretched state, when justice at a blow,
Requites God's patience in thine overthrow.
And canst thou (7) bear it? can thy heart indure (7) Psal. 75.7.
To think of everlasting burnings? sure
This must thy lot, thy fearful portion be;
If thou continue still a barren tree.

An Introduction

TO THE

Third PART

OF

HUSBANDRY.

NOw from the pleasant Orchard let us walk
A turn i'th fields, and there converse and talk
With Cows and Horses, they can teach us some
Choice Lessons, though irrational and dumb.
My Reader's weary, yet I do not fear
To be forsaken by one Reader here.
He'l doubtless stay to hear what questions I
Propound to beasts, and how they make reply.
The fatted Ox, and pamper'd horse you ride;
Their careless Master for his care thus chide.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

Upon the Husbandmans care for his cattle.

More care for Horse and Oxen many take
Than for their Souls and deareſt Childrens ſake.

OBSERVATION.

MAny Husbandmen are exceſſively careful about their Cattel, riſing themſelves early, or cauſing their ſervants to riſe betimes and to provender and dreſs them: Much time is ſpent in ſome Countreys, in trimming and adorning their Horſes with curious trappings and plumes of feathers; and if at any time a beaſt be ſick, what care is taken to recover and heal them? you will be ſure they ſhall want nothing that is neceſſary for them; yea, many will chuſe rather to want themſelves; than ſuffer their Horſes ſo to do; and take a great deal of comfort to ſee them thrive and proſper under their hands.

APPLICATION.

WHat one ſaid of bloody *Herod*, who ſlew ſo many children at *Bethlehem*, That it were better to be his ſwine, than his Son, may be truly enough applied to ſome Parents and Maſters, who take leſs care for the ſaving the ſouls of their Children and ſervants, than they do for the bodies of thoſe beaſts which daily feed at their ſtalls and cribs. Many there be who do in reference to their ſouls, as *Jacob* did, with reſpect to the preſervation of their bodies, when he put all the herds of Cattle before, and his Wives and little ones behind, as he went to meet his brother *Eſau*. 'Tis a weighty ſaying of a grave Author; *It's vile ingratitude to rejoyce when cattle multiply, and repine when Children increaſe; it is heatheniſh diſtruſtfulneſt to fear, that he who provides for your beaſts,*

Jenk. on Jude pag. 2. p. 107.

beasts, wilt not provide for your Children; and it's no less than unnatural cruelty to be careful of the bodies of beasts, and careless of the souls of children. Let us but a little compare your care and diligence in both respects, and see in a few particulars, whether you do indeed value your own, or your children and servants souls, as you do the life and health of a beast.

1. Your care for your very Horses is expressed early, whilst they are but Colts, and not come to do you any service; you are willing to be at pains and cost, to have them broken and brought to their way. This is more than ever many of them did for their Children; they can see them wild and profane, naturally taking a stroke or way of wickedness, but yet never were at any cost or pains to break them; these must be fondel'd and cockered up in the natural way of their own corruption and wickedness, and not a rod or reproof used to break them of it.

'Tis observed of the *Persians*, that they put out their children to School as soon as they could speak, and would not see them in seven years after, lest their indulgence should do them hurt. *Clarks* Mir. p. 506.

2. You keep your constant set times, morning and evening, to feed, water and dress your cattle, and will by no means neglect it once; but how many times have you neglected morning and evening duties in your families? yea, how many be there, whose very tables, in respect of any worship God hath there, do very little differ from the very cribs and mangers at which their Horses feed? As soon as you are up in a morning, you are with your beasts before you have been with your God; how little do such differ from beasts; and happy were it if they were no more accountable to God than their beasts are?

3. The end of your care, cost and pains about your cattle is, that they may be strong for labour, and the more serviceable to you; thus you comply with the end of their beings. But how rare a thing is it, to find these men as careful to fit their posterity to be useful and serviceable to God in their generations, which is the end of their beings? If you can make them rich, and provide good matches for them, you reckon

that you have fully discharged the duty of parents; if they will learn to hold the Plow, that you are willing to teach them: But when did you spend an hour to teach them the way of Salvation?

Now to convince such careless Parents of the heinousness of their sin, let these four Queries be solemnly considered.

Qu. 1. Whether this be a sufficient discharge of that great duty which God hath laid upon Christian Parents, in reference to their families? that God hath charged them with the souls of their families is undeniable, *Deut.* 6.6,7. *Eph.* 6.4. If God had not cloathed you with his authority; to command them in the way of the Lord; he would never have charged them so strictly to yield you obedience as he hath done, *Ephes.* 6.1. *Col.* 3.20. Well, a great trust is reposed in you, look to your duty, for without dispute you shall answer for it.

Qu. 2. Whether it be likely, if the time of youth (which is the moulding age) be neglected, they will be wrought upon to any good afterwards? Husbandmen, let me put a sensible case to you; do you not see in your very horses, that whilst they are young, you can bring them to any way; but if once they have got a false stroke, and by long custom it be grown natural to them, then there is no breaking them of it: yea, you see it in your very Orchards, you may bring a tender twig to grow in what form you please, but when it is grown to a sturdy limb, there is no bending it afterwards to any other form than what it naturally took. Thus it is with children, *Prov.* 22.6. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

Qu. 3. Whether, if you neglect to instruct them in the way of the Lord, *Satan*, and their own natural corruptions, will not instruct them in the way to hell? Consider this ye careless Parents; if you will not teach your children, the Devil will teach them; if you shew them not how to pray, he will shew them how to curse and swear, and take the name of the Lord in vain; if you grudge time and pains about their souls, the Devil doth not. Oh, 'tis a sad consideration, that so many children should be put to School to the Devil!

Qu. 4. What comfort are you like to have from them when they

are old, if you bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord when they are young? Many Parents have lived to reap in their old age, the fruit of their own folly and careleſneſs, in the looſe and vain education of their children. By *Licurgus* his Law, no Parent was to be relieved by his children in age, if he gave them not good education in their youth; and it is a Law at this day among the *Switzers*, that if any child be condemned to die for a capital offence, the Parents of that child are to be his executioners; theſe Laws were made to provoke Parents to look better to their charge. Believe this to be an undoubted truth; That that child which becomes (through thy default) an inſtrument to diſhonour God, ſhall prove ſooner or later, a ſon or daughter of ſorrow to thee.

REFLECTIONS.

GOd hath found out my ſin this day. This hath been my practice ever ſince I had a family committed to my charge; I have ſpent more time and pains about the bodies of my beaſts, then the ſouls of my children; beaſt that I am, for ſo doing; little have I conſidered the preciouſneſs of my own, or their immortal ſouls. How careful have I been to provide fodder to preſerve my cattle in the Winter, whilſt I leave my own, and their ſouls to periſh to eternity, and make no proviſion for them? Surely my children will one day curſe the time that ever they were born unto ſuch a cruel father, or of ſuch a mercileſs mother. Should I bring home the plague into my family, and live to ſee all my poor Children lye dead by the walls, if I had not the heart of a Tyger, ſuch a ſight would melt my heart; and yet, the death of their ſouls by the ſin which I propagated to them affects me not! Ah, that I could ſay, I had done but as much for them, as I have done for a beaſt that periſheth!

1. A Reflection for careleſs Parents.

But unhappy wretch that I am, God caſt a better lot for me, I am the off-ſpring of religious and tender Parents, who have always deeply concerned themſelves in the everlaſting ſtate of my ſoul; many prayers and tears have they

2. A Reflection for the diſobedient child of a gracious Parent.

poured out to for me, both in my hearing as well as in ſecret; many holy and wholſom counſels have they from time to time dropt upon me; many precious examples have they ſet in their own practice before me; many a time when I have ſinned againſt the Lord, have they ſtood over me with a rod in their hands, and tears in their eyes, uſing all means to reclaim me; but like an ungracious wretch I have ſlighted all their counſels, grieved their hearts, and imbittered their lives to them, by my ſinful courſes. Ah, my ſoul! thou art a degenerate Plant; better will it be with the off-ſpring of infidels, than with thee, if repentance prevent not; now I live in one family with them, but ſhortly I ſhall be ſeparated from them, as far as heaven is from hell; they now tenderly pity my miſery, but then they ſha l approve and applaud the righteous ſentence of Chriſt upon me: So little priviledge ſhall I then have from my relation to them, that they ſhall be produced as witneſſes againſt me, and all their rejected counſels, reproofs, and examples, charged home upon me, as the aggravations of my wickedneſs; and better it will be, when it ſhall come to that, that I had been brought forth by a beaſt, than ſprang from the loyns of ſuch Parents.

The *Poem.*

YOur cattle in fat paſtures thrive and grow,
There's nothing wanting; that ſhould make them ſo.
(1) Iſa. 1. 3. The pamper'd Horſe commends his Maſters (1) care,
(2) Gen. 24. 31, 32. Who neither pains, or coſt, doth grudge or (2) ſpare.
But art not thou mean while, the veriſt fool;
That pamper'ſt beaſts, and ſtary'ſt thy precious ſoul?
(3) Eccl. 38. 21 'Twere well, if you could (3) dye, as now you live
Like beaſts, and had no more account to give,
O that theſe lines your folly might detect!
Who both your own and childrens ſouls neglect.

To

To care for beasts. O man, prepare to hear
The doleful'st language that e're pierc'd thine ear!
When your children once in hell shall meet,
And with such language their damn'd Parents greet,
" O curſed father, wretched mother, why
" Was I your off-ſpring? would to God that I
" Had ſprung from Tygers, who more (4) tender be (4)Nah. 2. 11. Lam. 4. 3.
" Unto their young, than you have been to me.
" How did you ſpend your thoughts, time, care and coſt
" About my body? whilſt my ſoul was (5) loſt. (5)Mar. 16. 26.
" Did you not know I had a ſoul that muſt
" Live (6) when this body was diſſolv'd to duſt? (3)Eccl. 3. 21.
" You could not chuſe but underſtand if I,
" Without an intereſt in Chriſt did dye,
" It needs muſt (7) come to this; O how could you (7)Mar. 16. 16.
" Prove ſo remorſleſs, and no pity ſhew!
" O cruel parents! I may curſe the day
" That I was born of ſuch as did betray.
" Their Child to endleſs torments. Now muſt I
" With, and through you, in flames for ever lie.
Let this make every Parent tremble, leſt
He loſe his child, whilſt caring for his beaſt.
Or leſt his own poor ſoul do ſtarve and pine
Whilſt he takes thoughts for Horſes, Sheep and kine.

CHAP. XX.

When under loads your beaſts do groan, think then
How great a mercy 'tis that you are men.

Upon the hard labour and cruel uſage of beaſts.

OBSERVATION.

THough ſome men be exceſſively careful and tender over their beaſts (as was noted in the former Chapter) yet others

others are cruel and mercileſs towards them, not regarding how they ride or burden them. How often have I ſeen them fainting under their loads? wrought off their legs, and turned out with galled backs into the fields, or high-wayes, to ſhift for a little graſs? many times have I heard and pitied them, groaning under unreaſonable burdens, and beaten on by mercileſs drivers, till at laſt by ſuch cruel uſage they have been deſtroyed, and then caſt into a ditch for dogs meat!

APPLICATION.

SUch ſights as theſe ſhould make men thankful for the mercy of their Creation, and bleſs their bountiful Creator, that they were not made ſuch creatures themſelves. Some beaſts are made *ad eſum*, only for food, being no otherwiſe uſeful to man, as *ſwine*, &c. theſe are only fed for ſlaughter, we kill and eat them, and regard not their cries and ſtruglings when the knife is thruſt to their very hearts; others are only *ad uſum*, for ſervice, whilſt living, but unprofitable when dead; as *Horſes*, theſe we make to drudge and toil for us from day to day, but kill them not; others are both *ad eſum, & uſum*, for food when dead, and ſervice whilſt alive, as the *Ox* theſe we make to plow our fields, draw our carriages, and afterwards prepare them for ſlaughter.

But man was made for nobler ends, created Lord of the lower world; not to ſerve, but to be ſerved by other creatures; a mercy able to melt the hardeſt heart into thankfulneſs. I remember, *Luther* preſſing men to be thankful, that they are not brought into the loweſt condition of creatures, and to bleſs God that they can ſee any creature below themſelves, gives us a famous inſtance in the following ſtory: Two *Cardinals* (ſaith he) riding in a great deal of pomp to the Council of *Conſtance*, by the way they heard a man in the fields, weeping and wailing bitterly, they rode to him, and asked what he ailed? perceiving his eye intently fixed upon an ugly toad, he told them that his heart was melted with the conſideration of this mercy, that God had not made him ſuch

Luther in 3. *Precept.*

a

a deformed and loathsom creature, though he were formed out of the same clay with it: *Hoc est quod amare fleo*, said he, This is that, that makes me weep bitterly. Whereupon one of the *Cardinals* cryes out, Well said the Father, the unlearned will rise and take heaven, when we with all our learning shall be thrust into hell. That which melted the heart of this poor man, should melt every heart when we behold the misery to which these poor creatures are subjected, and this will appear a mercy of no slight consideration, if we but draw a comparison betwixt our selves, and these irrational creatures, in these three particulars,

Though they and we were made of the same mould and clay, yet how much better hath God dealt with us, even as to the outward man? the structure of our bodies is much more excellent. God made other creatures by a word of command, but man by counsel; it was not be Thou, but let Us make man. We might have been made stones without sence, or beasts without reason, but we were made men. The noble structure and symmetry of our bodies invites our souls, not only to thankfulness, but admiration. *David* speaking of the curious frame of the body, saith, *I am wonderfully made*, *Psal.* 139. 14. or as the vulgar reads it, painted as with a needle; like some rich piece of needle-work curiously embroydered with nerves and veins. Was any part of the common lump of clay thus fashioned? *Galen* gave *Epicurus* an hundred years time to imagine a more commodious situation, configuration, or composition of any one part of a humane body; and (as one saith) if all the Angels in heaven had studied to this day, they could not have cast the body of man into a more curious mould. 1.

How little ease or rest have they? they live not many years, and those they do is in bondage and misery, groaning under the effects of sin; but God provided better for us, even as to our outward condition in this world; we have the more rest, because they have so little. How many refreshments and comforts hath God provided for us, of which they are uncapable? if we be weary with labour, we can take 2.

our

our reſt; but freſh or weary, they muſt ſtand to it, or ſink under it from day to day.

3. What a narrow capacity hath God given to beaſts! what a large capacity to man! Alas! they are only capable of a little ſenſitive pleaſure; as you ſhall ſee ſometimes, how they will friſk in a green paſture, this is all they be capable of, and this death puts an end to; but how comprehenſive are our ſouls in their capacities? we are made in the image of God; we can look beyond preſent things, and are capable of the higheſt happineſs, and that to all eternity; the ſoul of a beaſt is but a material form, which wholly depending upon, moſt needs dye with the body; but our ſouls are a divine ſpark or blaſt; and when the body dyes; it dyes not with it, but ſubſiſts even in its ſeparated ſtate.

REFLECTIONS.

1. A Reflection for an unthankful ſinner. HOw great a ſin is ingratitude to God, for ſuch a common, but choice mercy of creation, and proviſion for me in this world? There is no creature made worſe by kindneſs, but man. There is a kind of gratitude which I may obſerve even in theſe bruit beaſts; they do in their way acknowledge their benefactors; *The Ox knowes his owner, and the Aſs his Maſters Crib.* How ready are they to ſerve ſuch as feed and cheriſh them? but I have been both unthankful and unſerviceable to my Creator and Benefactor, that hath done me good all my dayes; thoſe poor creatures that ſweat and groan under the loads that I lay upon them, never ſinned againſt God, nor trangreſſed the Laws of their Creation as I have done; and yet God hath dealt better with me than with them. Oh that the bounty of God, and his diſtinguiſhing mercy between me and the beaſts that periſh, might move and melt my heart into thankfulneſs! O that I might conſider ſeriouſly what the higher and more excellent end of my Creation is, and might more endeavor to anſwer and live up to it! Or elſe (O my ſoul) it will be worſe with thee than with the beaſts. 'Tis true they are under bondage and miſery; but it is but for a little time, death will end all their

their pains, and ease them of all their heavy loads; but I shall groan to all eternity, under a heavier burden than ever they felt; they have no account to give, but so have I. What comfort is it that I have a larger capacity than a beast hath? that God hath endowed me with reason, which is denied to them? Alas! this will but augment my misery, and enlarge me to take in a greater measure of anguish.

2. A Reflection for an elect soul.

But how many steps (O my soul) mayest thou ascend in the praises of thy God, when thou considerest the mercies that God hath bestowed upon thee! not only in that he made thee, not a stone or tree without sense, or an horse, or dog without reason; but that thou art not an infidel without light, or an unregenerate person without grace. What! to have sense, and all the delights of it, which stones have not; reason, with the more high and noble pleasures of it, which beasts have not; the light and knowledge of the great things of the Gospel, whith the heathens have not; and such an expectation and hope of unconceivable glory and felicity, which the unsanctified have not. O my soul! how rich! how bountiful hath thy God been to thee! these are the overflowings of his love to thee, who wast moulded out of the same lump with the *beasts*, that groan on earth, yea with the damned that howl hell in; well may I say, that God hath been a good God to me.

The *Poem.*

WHen I behold a tyred Jade put on
With whip and spur till all his flesh be gone.
See streams of sweat run down his bleeding sides,
How little mercy's shewn by him that rides.
If I more thankless to my God don't prove,
Than such a Rider's merciless, 'twill move
My soul to praise, for who sees this, and can
But bless the Lord, that he was made a man?

And ſuch a ſight the Rider ought to move,
This Meditation duly to improve.
What hath this creature done, that he ſhould be
Thus beaten, wounded and tir'd out by me?
He is my fellow creature, 'tis meer grace;
I had not been in his, he in my caſe.
Ungrateful, ſtupid man; God might have made
Me bear the ſaddle, as I ſee this Jade.
He never ſin'd: but for my ſin doth lye
Subjected unto all this miſery.
Lord, make my heart relent; that I ſhould be
To thee more uſeleſs than my Horſe to me.
He did his utmoſt, went as long as ever
His legs could bear him, but for me I never
Thus ſpent my ſtrength for God; but oft have bin
Too prodigal thereof, in ways of ſin;
Though he's the horſe and I the man; 'twill be
Far better with my horſe, one day than me:
Unleſs thy grace prevent, and ſuper-add
A new Creation; unto that I had.
Could every Rider fix a ſerious thought
On ſuch a ſubject, and hereby be taught
To ſpiritualize it, and improve it thus;
How ſweet would tedious journeys be to us?
But ſuch a task, a graceleſs heart dogs out
More than the tired horſe, I write about.

CHAP. III.

Upon the ſeeking of loſt Cattle.

When ſeeking your loſt Cattle, keep in mind
That thus Chriſt Jeſus ſeeks, your ſouls to find.

OBSERVATION.

WHen Cattle are ſtrayed away from your fields, you uſe all care and diligence to recover them again, tracing

tracing their foot-steps, crying them in Market-Towns, sending your servants abroad, and inquiring your selves of all that you think can give news of them. What care and pains men will take in such cases, was exemplified in *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 9. 4, 5. who with his servant passed through *Mount Ephraim*, to seek the Asses that were strayed from his father, and through the Land of *Shalisha*, and through the Land of *Shalim*, and they were not there, and through the Land of the *Benjamites*, but found them not.

APPLICATION.

THe care and pains you take to recover your lost cattel, carries a sweet and lively representation of the love of *Jesus Christ*, in the recovery of lost sinners. *Jesus Christ* came on purpose from heaven upon a like errand, to seek and to save that which was lost, *Mat.* 18. 11. There are several particulars in which this glorious design of Christ, in seeking and saving lost man, and the care and pains of Husbandmen in recovering their lost cattle, do meet and touch, though there be as many particulars also in which they differ; all which I shall open under the following heads.

We sometimes find that cattle will break out of those very fields where they have been bred, and where they want nothing that is needful for them. Just thus, lost man departed from his God, brake out of that pleasant enclosure where he was abundantly provided for, both as to soul and body; yet then he brake over the hedge of the command, and went astray, *Eccles.* 7, 29. *Lo this only have I found, that God made man upright, but he sought out to himself many inventions.* He was not content and satisfied with that blessed state God had put him into, but would be trying new conclusions to the loss and ruin, both of himself and his posterity. 1.

Strayers are evermore sufferers for it; all they get by it, is to be pinned and pounded; and what did man get by departing from his God, but ruin and misery to soul and body? Will you have an abbreviate of his sufferings and losses? (the full account none can give you) why, by straying from his 2.

God, he loſt the rectitude and holineſs of his nature; (like a true ſtrayer) he is all dirty and miry, overſpread and beſmeared both in ſoul and body, with the odious filthineſs of ſin; he loſt the liberty and freedom of his will to good; a precious jewel of ineſtimable value: this is a real miſery incurr'd by the fall, though ſome have ſo far loſt their underſtandings and humility, as not to own it; he hath loſt his God, his ſoul, his happineſs, and his very bowels of compaſſion towards himſelf in this miſerable ſtate.

3. When your Cattle are ſtrayed, yea, though it be but one of the flock, or herd, you leave all the reſt, and go after that which is loſt: So did *Jeſus Chriſt*, who in the fore-cited place; *Mat.* 18. 12. compares himſelf to ſuch a Shepherd; he left heaven it ſelf, and all the bleſſed *Angels* there, to come into this world to ſeek loſt man. O the precious eſteem, and dear love that Chriſt had to poor man! How did his bowels yearn towards us in our loſt ſtate! How did he pity us in our miſery! As if he had ſaid, poor creatures, they have loſt themſelves, and are become a prey to the devil, in a periſhing ſtate; I will ſeek after them and ſave them. The Son of man is come to ſeek and to ſave.

4. You are glad when you have found your ſtrayers; much more is Chriſt, when he hath found a loſt ſoul. O 'tis a great ſatisfaction to him to ſee the fruit of the travel of his ſoul, Iſa. 53. *Yea, there is more joy in heaven over one ſinner that repenteth, than ninety nine juſt perſons that need no repentance.* What demonſtrations of joy and gladneſs did the father of the Prodigal give, when he found his Son that was loſt, *Luke* 15. 20.

5. When you have brought home your ſtrayers, you ſometimes clog them, to prevent their wandring again, and ſtop up the gaps with thorns; and ſo doth God oftentimes by ſuch ſouls as are recovered and brought home to Chriſt; he hangs a clog of affliction to prevent their departure from God again, 2 *Cor.* 12. 7.

But then there are five particulars in which Chriſt ſeeking
1. loſt ſouls, and your ſeeking loſt cattle differ.

Your cattle ſometimes find the way home themſelves, and re-

return to you of their own accord; but loſt man never did, nor can do ſo; he was his own deſtroyer, but can never be his own Saviour; it was impoſſible for him to have loſt his God, but having once loſt him, can never find him again of himſelf. Alas! his heart is bent to back-ſliding, he hath no will to return. Hear how Chriſt complains, *Joh.* 5.40. *Ye will not come unto me.* Mans recovery begins in God, not in himſelf.

2. Your ſervants can find, and bring back your loſt cattle as well as you; but ſo cannot Chriſts ſervants. Miniſters may *diſcover*, but cannot *recover* them; they daily *ſee*, but cannot *ſave* them; lament them they can, but help them they cannot; *intreat* and beg them to return they can and do, but *prevail* with them they cannot. *Melanchon* thought when he began to preach, to perſwade all; but old *Adam* was too hard for young *Melanchon.*

3. You ſeek all the cattle that are ſtrayed from you, eſpecially the beſt; but *Jeſus Chriſt* only ſeeks poor loſt man. There were other creatures, and ſuch as by nature were more excellent, that loſt their God and themſelves; I mean, the *Apoſtate Angels*; but he came not to ſeek them: Herein his ſingular love to man appears.

4. When you have recoverd and brought home your loſt cattle, you may loſe them the ſecond time, and never recover them again; but ſo cannot Chriſt. Man once recovered, is for ever ſecured by him. *All that thou haſt given me I have kept, and not one of them is loſt, but the ſon of perdition*; and he was never ſavingly found, *Joh.* 17.12.

5. Though you prize your cattle, yet you will not venture your life for the recovery of them; rather let them go than regain them with ſuch an hazard; but *Jeſus Chriſt* not only ventured but actually laid down his life to recover, and ſave loſt man: He redeemed them at the price of his own blood; he is that good Shepherd that laid down his life for the Sheep. O the ſurpaſſing love of Chriſt to loſt ſouls!

RE-

REFLECTIONS.

1. A Reflection for a loſt ſoul.

LOrd, I am a loſt creature, an undone ſoul; and herein lies my miſery, that I have not only loſt my God, but have no heart to return to him! Nay, I fly from Chriſt, who is come on purpoſe from heaven to ſeek and to ſave me; his Meſſengers are abroad ſeeking for ſuch as I am, but I avoid them, or at leaſt refuſe to obey their call and perſwaſions to return. Ah, what a miſerable ſtate am I in! every ſtep I go is a ſtep towards hell; my ſoul, with the Prodigal is ready to periſh in a ſtrange Countrey! but I have no mind with him to return home; wretched ſoul, what will the end of this be? If God have loſt thee, the Devil hath found thee; he takes up all ſtrayers from God: yea, death, and hell will ſhortly find thee, if Chriſt do not; and then thy recovery (O my ſoul!) will be impoſſible. Why ſit I here periſhing and dying? I am not yet as irrecoverably loſt as the damned are. O let me delay no longer, leſt I be loſt for ever!

2. A Reflection for one that was loſt, but is found.

O my ſoul! for ever bleſs and admire the love of *Jeſus Chriſt*, who came from heaven to ſeek and ſave, ſuch a loſt ſoul as I was. Lord, how marvellous, and matchleſs is thy love? I was loſt and am found. I am found and did not ſeek; nay, I am found by him from whom I fled. Thy love, O my Saviour! was a preventing love, a wonderful love; thou lovedſt me much more than I loved my ſelf; I was cruel to my own ſoul, but thou waſt kind; thou ſoughteſt for me, a loſt ſinner, and not for loſt *Angels*; thy hand of grace caught hold of me and hath let go thouſands, and ten thouſands, as good as my ſelf by nature. Like another *David*, thou didſt reſcue my poor loſt ſoul out of the mouth of the deſtroyer; yea, more than ſo, thou didſt looſe thine own life to find mine: And now, dear *Jeſus*, ſince I am thus marvellouſly recovered, ſhall I ever ſtraggle again from thee? O, let it for ever be a warning to me, how I turn aſide into by-paths of ſin any more!

The

The *Poem.*

VVHen cattle from your fields ar gone aſtray,
and you to ſeek them through the Country ride;
Enquiring for them all along the way; 1 Sam. 9. 4, 5.
tracking their foot-ſteps, where they turn'd aſide.

One ſervant this way ſent, another that;
ſearching the fields and Countrey round about:
This meditation now falls in ſo pat;
as if God ſent it to enquire you out.

My beaſts are loſt, and ſo am (1) I by ſin; (1) Luk. 15. 32.
my wretched ſoul from God thus wandring went,
And I ſeek them, ſo was (2) I ſought by him (2) Mat. 18. 11.
who from the (3) fathers boſom forth was ſent. (3) Joh. 1. 18.

Purſu'd by Sermons, follow'd cloſe by grace;
and ſtrong convictions Chriſt hath ſought for me,
Yea though I (4) ſhun him ſtill he gives me chaſe. (4) Joh. 5. 40.
as if reſolv'd I ſhould not damned be.

When (5) Angels loſt themſelves it was not ſo,
God did not ſeek, or once for them enquire; (5) Heb. 2. 16.
But ſaid, let the Apoſtate creatures go,
I'le plague them for (6) it with eternal fire. (6) Jude 6.

Lord what am (7) I, that thou ſhouldſt ſet thine eyes (7) 1 Cor. 1. 27.
and ſtill look after ſuch a wretch as I?
Whoſe matchleſs mercy, and rich grace (8) deſpiſe, (8) Pſal. 68. 18
as if in ſpight thereof reſolv'd to die.

Why ſhould I ſhun thee, bleſſed Saviour, why
ſhould I avoid thee thus? thou doſt not chaſe
My ſoul to (9) ſlay it; O that ever I (9) Rom. 6. 23.
ſhould fly a Saviour that's ſo full of Grace!

Long

Long haſt thou ſought me, Lord, I now return;
O let thy bowels of compaſſion ſound,
For my departure, I ſincerely mourn;
and let this day, thy wandring ſheep be found.

CHAP. IV.

Upon the feeding of fat Cattle.

Fat beaſts you kill, the lean you uſe to ſave:
God's diſpenſations, ſome ſuch meaning have.

OBSERVATION.

IT is a good Obſervation of a Father, and well applied; *Vituli triturantes quotidie ligantur, vituli mactandi quotidie in paſcuis libere relinquntur.* Oxen for uſe are daily yoaked and kept ſhort, whilſt thoſe that are deſigned for the ſhambles, are let looſe in green paſtures, to feed at pleaſure. Store beaſts fare hard, and are kept lean and low; feeding beaſts are excuſed from the yoke, whilſt others are laboured and wrought hard every day, the one hath more than he can eat, the other would eat more if he had it.

APPLICATION.

THus deals the Lord oft-times with his own elect, whom he deſigns for glory; and with the wicked, who are preparing for the day of wrath. Thus are they filled with earthly proſperity, and creature-enjoyments, like reſty and wanton beaſts turned out at liberty in a fat paſture, whilſt poor Saints are kept hard and ſhort, *Amos* 1. 4. *Hear this word ye kine of* Baſhan, *that are in the mountains of* Samaria, *which oppreſs the poor, and cruſh the needy.* Theſe Metaphorical kine are the proſperous oppreſſors of the world, full fed, and wanton wicked men. 'Tis true, heaven hath not all the poor,

nor hell all the rich; but it is a very common dispensation of providence to bestow most of the things of this world upon them that have no portion in heaven; and to keep them short on earth, for whom that kingdom is provided. Let me draw forth the similitude in a few particulars.

1. The beasts of slaughter have the fattest pastures; so have the ungodly in the world; *Their eyes stand out with fatness, they have more than heart could wish*, Psal. 73.7. their hearts are as fat as *grease*, Psal. 119.70. These be they that fleet off the cream of earthly enjoyments, *whose bellies are filled with hidden treasures*, Psal. 17.14. *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked*, Job. 9.24. O, what full estates? what an affluence of earthly delights hath God cast in upon some wicked men? there's much *wantonness*, but no want in their dwellings: Some that now know not which way to turn themselves in hell, once knew not where to bestow their goods on earth.

2. Feeding beasts grow wanton in their full pastures; there you shall see them tumble and frisk, and kick up their heels. The same effect hath the prosperity of the wicked, it makes them wanton; their life is but a diversion from one pleasure to another, *Job* 21.11, 12, 13. *They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance; they take the timbrel, and harp, and rejoyce at the sound of the Organ; they spend their dayes in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave.* The same character doth the Prophet *Amos* give of them, *Amos* 6.4,5,6. *They stretch themselves on beds of Ivory, drink Wine in bowls*, &c. and no sorrow goes to their hearts. These are they that live in pleasures upon earth, as a fish in the water, *Jam.* 5.5.

3. These fat pastures do but the sooner hasten the death of these cattle; the sooner they are fatted, the sooner they are slaughtered; and the prosperity of the wicked serves to the same end. The prosperity of fools shall destroy them (*i.e.*) it shall be the means and instrument of heating and hightening their lusts, and therefore fitting them for destruction; their prosperity is food and fewel to their corruptions. Many wicked men had not been so soon ripe for hell, had they not grown in the Sun-shine of prosperity.

4. Fatted beasts do not in the least understand the intent and meaning of the Husbandman, in allowing them such large and fat pastures, which he denies to his other cattle; and as little as beasts, do wicked men understand the scope and end of Gods providences, in casting prosperity and wealth upon them; little do they think their tables are a snare, a gin, and a trap for their souls; they only (like beasts) mind what is before them, but do not at all understand the tendency and end of these their sensual delights.

5. Though the Husbandman keep his store cattle in short commons, yet he intends to preserve them; these shal remain with him, when the others are driven to the slaughter. Such a design of preservation is carried on in all those outward straits, wants and hardships which the Lord exposes his people to. I confess, such dispensations, for present, are very stumbling and puzling things even to gracious and wise persons. To see wicked men, not only exempted from their troubles, but even oppressed with prosperity; to see a godly man in wants and straits, and a wicked man have more than his heart can wish, is a case that poses the wisest Christian, till he consider the designs and issues of both those Providences, and then he acquiesces in the wisdom of God so ordering it, *Psal.* 73. 5, 14, 18, 23.

REFLECTIONS.

1. A Reflection for a voluptuous worldling.

DOth my prosperity fat me up for hell, and prepare me for the day of slaughter? little cause have I then to glory in it, and lift up my heart upon these things. Indeed, God hath given, (I cannot say blessed me with) a fulness of creature-enjoyments; upon these my carnal heart seizeth greedily and securely, not at all suspecting a snare lying in these things, for the ruin of my soul. What are all these charming pleasures, but so many rattles to quiet my soul, whilst its damnation steals insensibly upon it? What are all my businesses and imployments in the world, but so many diversions from the business of life? There are but two differences betwixt me, and the poorest slave the devil hath on earth;

earth; such are whipt on to hell by outward miseries, and I am coached to hell in a little more pomp and honour; these will have a less, and I greater account in the day of reckoning. O that I had never known prosperity! I am now tumbling in a green pasture, and shortly shall be hanging up in the shambles in hell; if this be the best fruit of my prosperity, if I were taken by cruel *Canibals*, and fed with the richest fare, but withall understood that the design of it were, to fat me up like a beast for them to feed upon; how little stomach should I have to their dainties? O my soul! it were much better for thee to have a sanctified poverty, which is the portion of many Saints than an insnaring prosperity, set as a trap to ruin thee for ever.

2. A Reflection for a poor Christian.

The wisdom of my God hath allotted me but short commons here, his providence feeds me but from hand to mouth; but I am (and well may be) contented with my present state; that which sweetens it, is, that I am one of the Lords preserved. How much better is a morsel of bread, and a draught of water here, with an expectancy of glory hereafter, than a fat pasture given in, and fitting for the wrath to come? Well, since the case stands thus, blessed be God for my present lot; though I have but little in hand, I have much in hope; my present troubles will serve to sweeten my future joys; and the sorrows of this life will give a lustre to the glory of the next; that which is now hard to suffer, will then be sweet to remember; my songs then will be louder than my groans now.

The Poem.

THose beasts which for the shambles are design'd,
In fragrant flowry Meadow you shall find;
Where they abound with rich and plenteous fare,
Whilst others graze in pastures thin and bare,

Thoſe live a ſhort and pleaſant life; but theſe
Protract their lives in dry and ſhorter leas.
(1) Job. 21. 13. Thus live the wicked, (1) thus they do abound,
With earthly glory, and with honour crown'd.
Their lofty heads unto the Stars aſpire,
And radiant beams, their ſhining brows attire.
(2) Job 21. 13. The (2) fatteſt portion's ſerv'd up in their diſh,
(3) ib'd. Yea (3) they have more than their own heart can with.
(4) Jam. 4. 5. Diſſolv'd in (4) pleaſures, crown'd with buds of *May*,
They for a time in theſe fat paſtures play;
Friſk, dance and leap, like full fed beaſts; and even
(5) Pſal. 73. 9 Turn up their (5) wanton heels againſt the heaven.
Not underſtanding that this pleaſant life
Serves but to fit them for the Butchers knife.
In fragrant Meads they tumbling are to day,
(6) Job 21. 13. To morrow to the (6) ſlaughter led away.
Their pleaſure's gone, and vaniſh'd like a bubble
(7) Rev. 18. 7. Which maks their future torments on them (7) double.
(8) Jam. 2. 5. Mean while, Gods little flock is (8) poor and lean;
Becauſe the Lord did ner'e intend, or mean
This for their portion: and beſides doth know
(9) ibid. Their ſouls (9) prove beſt, where ſhorteſt graſs doth grow.
Cheer up poor flock although your fare be thin,
Yet here is ſomething to take comfort in:
You here ſecurely feed, and need not fear
Th'infernal Butcher can't approach you hear.
'Tis ſomewhat that, but Oh, which far tranſcends!
Your glorious Shepherd's coming; who intends
To lead you hence, unto that fragrant hill
(1) Pſal. 17. 15. Where with green paſtures he his flocks will (1) fill.
On which he from coeleſtial caſements pours
The ſweeteſt dews, and conſtant gracious ſhowres.
Along whoſe banks, rivers of pleaſures glide
There his bleſs'd Flocks, for ever ſhall abide.
O envy not the worldlings preſent joys
Which to your future mercies are but toyes.
Their paſture now is green, your's dry, and burn'd:
(2) Iſa. 65. 13, 14. But then the (2) Scene is chang'd, the tables turn'd.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Good Husbands labour for Posterity,
To after ages; Saints must have an eye.

Upon the Husbandmans care for posterity.

OBSERVATION.

PRovident and careful Husbandmen do not only labour to supply their own necessities while living, but to lay up something for their posterity when they are gone; they do not only leave to their children what their progenitors left them, but they desire to leave it improved and bettered. None but bad Husbands and spend-thrifts are of the mind with that *Heathen Emperor Tiberius*, who having put all into such confusions in the *Empire*, that it might be thought the world would end with him; yet pleased himself with this apprehension, that he should be out of the reach of it; and would often say, when I am dead, let heaven and earth mingle; if the world will but hold my time, let it break when I am gone: But provident men look beyond their own time, and do very much concern themselves in the good or evil of their posterity.

APPLICATION.

WHat careful Husbands do, with respect to the provisions they make for their children, that all prudent Christians are bound to do, with respect to the truths committed to them, and by them, to be transmitted to succeeding Saints.

In the first ages of the world, even till the Law was given, faithful men were instead of books and records; they did by oral tradition convey the truths of God to posterity; but since the sacred truth hath been consign'd to writing, no such tradition

tion (except full consentient with that written word) is to be received as authentick; but the truths therein delivered to the Saints, are by verbal declarations, open confessions, and constant sufferings, to be preserved and delivered from age to age. This was the constant care of the whole cloud of witnesses, both ancient and modern, who have kept the word of Gods patience, and would not accept their own lives, liberties or estates; no, nor the whole world in exchange, for that invaluable treasure of truth; they have carefully practised *Solomons* counsel, *Prov.* 23.23. *Buy the truth, but sell it not*; they would not alienate that fair inheritance for all the inheritances on earth. Upon the same reasons that you refuse to part with, or embezel your estates, Christians also refuse to part with the truths of God.

1. You will not waste or alienate your inheritance, because it is precious and of great value in your eyes; but much more precious are Gods truths to his people. *Luther* professed, he would not take the whole world for one leaf of his Bible. Though some profane persons may say with *Pilate*, What is truth? yet know, that any one truth of the Gospel is more worth than all the inheritances upon the earth; they are the great things of Gods Law, and he that sells them for the greatest things in this world, makes a soul-undoing bargain.

2. You will not waste or part with your inheritance, because you know your posterity will be much wronged by it. They that baffle or drink away an estate, drink the tears of their sad widows, and the very blood of their impoverished children. The people of God do also consider, how much the generations to come are concern'd in the conservation of the truths of God for them; it cuts them to the heart, but to think, that their children should be brought up to worship dumb Idols, and fall down before a wooden or a breaden god. The very birds and beasts will expose their own bodies, to apparent danger of death, to preserve their young. Religion doth much more intender the hearts and bowels, than nature doth.

3. You reckon it a foul disgrace to sell your estates, and become Bankrupts; 'tis a word that hears ill among you: And a Christian

Christian accounts it the highest reproach in the world, to be a traitor to, or an *Apostate* from the truths of God. When the primitive Saints were strictly required to deliver up their Bibles, those that did so, were justly branded and husht out of their company, under the odious title of *Traditores*, or deliverers.

4. You are so loath to part with your estates, because you know it is hard recovering an estate again, when once you have lost it. Christians do also know how difficult it will be for the people of God in times to come, to recover the light of the Gospel again, if once it be extinguished. There is no truth of God recovered out of *Antichrists* hands, without great wrestlings, and much blood. The Church may call every point of reformed doctrine and discipline so recovered, her *Napthalies*; for with great wrestlings, she hath wrestled for them. *Earnestly contending for the faith once delivered to them*, Jude 3.

5. To conclude, rather than you will part with your estates, you will choose to suffer many wants and hardships all your lives you will fare hard, and go bare, to preserve what you have for your Posterity: But the people of God have put themselves upon far greater hardships than these, to preserve truth; they have chosen to suffer reproaches, poverty, prisons, death, and the most cruel torments, rather than the loss of Gods truth. All the *Martyrologies* will inform you what their sufferings have been, to keep the word of Gods patience; they have boldly told their enemies that they might pluck their hearts out of their bodies, but should never pluck the truth out of their hearts.

REFLECTIONS.

1. A Reflection for cowardly and fainthearted Professors.

BAse unbelieving heart! how have I flinched and shrunk from truth when it hath been in danger? I have rather chosen to leave it, than my life, liberty or estate, as a prey to the enemy. I have left truth, and just it is, that the God of truth should leave me. Cowardly soul, that durst not make a stand for truth! yea, rather bold and daring soul, that

that wouldst rather venture to look a wrathful God; than an angry man in the face. I would not own and preserve the truth, and the God of truth will not own me, 2 *Tim.* 1. 2. *If we deny him he will deny us.*

2. A Reflection for such as suffer for truth.

Lord! unto me hast thou committed the precious treasure and trust of truth; and as I received it, so do I desire to deliver it to the generations to come, that the people which are yet unborn may praise the Lord. God forbid I should ever part with such a fair inheritance, and thereby begger my own, and thousands of souls! Thou hast given me thy truth, and the world hates me, I well know that is the ground of the quarrel: would I but throw truth over the walls, how soon would a retreat be sounded to all persecutors? But Lord! thy truth is invaluably precious; what a vile thing is my blood, compared with the least of all thy truths? Thou hast charged me not to sell it, and in thy strength I resolve never to lift a fine, and cut off that golden line whereby thy truths are entailed upon thy people, from generation to generation: my friends may go, my liberty go, my blood may go; but as for thee, precious truth, thou shalt never go.

3. A Reflection for such as are in quiet possession of truth.

How dear hath this inheritance of truth cost some Christians? how little hath it cost us? We are entred into their labours; we reap in peace what they sowed in tears; yea, in blood. O the grievous sufferings that they chose to endure, rather than to deprive us of such an inheritance, those noble souls, heated with the love of Christ, and care for our souls, made many bold and brave adventures for it; and yet at what a low rate do we value what cost them so dear? like young heirs that never knew the getting of an estate, we spend it freely. Lord, help us thankfully and diligently to improve thy truths, while we are in quiet possession of them. Such intervals of peace and rest, are usually of no long continuance with thy people.

The

The *Poem.*

A Publick ſpirit ſcorns to plant no root
But ſuch from which himſelf may gather fruit.
For thus he reaſons, if I reap the gains
Of my Laborious Predeceſſors pains;
How equal is it, that poſterity
Should reap the fruits of preſent induſtry?
Should every age but ſerve its turn, and take
No thought for future times? it ſoon would make
A Bankrupt world, and ſo entail a curſe
From age to age, as it grows worſe and worſe.
Our Chriſtian predeceſſors careful thus
Have been (1) to leave an heritage to us, (1) Rev. 3.10.
Chriſts precious truths (2) conſerved in their blood, (2) Rev. 12.11.
For no leſs price thoſe truths our fathers ſtood.
They have tranſmitted, would not (3) alienate (3) Heb. 11.37.
From us their children ſuch a fair eſtate.
We eat what they did ſet, and ſhall truth fail
In our days? ſhall we cut off th'entail?
Or end the line of honor? nay, what's worſe
Give future ages cauſe to hate, and curſe
Our memories? like *Naboth*, may this age 1 Kings 21. 2.
Part with their blood, ſooner than heritage.
Let pity move us, let us think upon
Our (4) Childrens ſouls; when we are dead, and gone. (4) Pſ. 102.18.
Shall they poor ſouls, in darkneſs grope, when we
Put out the light, by which they elſe might ſee
The way to glory? yea, what's worſe? ſhall it
Be ſaid in time to come (5) Chriſt did commit (5) Jude 3.
A precious treaſure, purchas'd by his blood;
To us, for ours; and for our Childrens good?
But we like cowards, falſe, perfidious men,
For carnal eaſe, loſt it, our ſelves, and them.
O let us leave to after ages more,
Than we receiv'd from all that went before.
That thoſe to come might bleſs the Lord, and keep
Our names alive, when we in duſt ſhall ſleep.

CHAP. VI.

Upon the Husbandmans care to prove and preserve his Deeds.

Deeds for your Lands you prove, and keep with care;
O that for heaven you but as careful were.

OBSERVATION.

WE generally find, men are not more careful in trying gold, or in keeping it, than they are in examining their Deeds, and preserving them; these are virtually their whole estate, and therefore it concerns them to be careful of them: If they suspect a flaw in their Lease or Deed, they repair to the ablest Counsell, submit it to his judgment, make the worst of their cause, and query about all the supposeable dangers with him; if he tell them their case is suspicious and hazardous, how much are they perplexed and troubled? they can neither eat, drink, or sleep in peace, till they have a good settlement; and willing they are to be at much cost and pains to obtain it.

APPLICATION.

THese cares and fears, with which you are perplexed in such cases, give you a little glimpse of those troubles of soul, with which the people of God are perplexed about their eternal condition, which perhaps you have been hitherto unacquainted with, and therefore slighted them, as fansies and whimsies. I say, your own fears and troubles, if ever you were ingaged by a cunning and powerful adversary in a Law-suit for your estate, may give you a little glimpse of spiritual troubles; and indeed it is no more but a glimpse of it: For, as the loss of an earthly (though fair) inheritance is but a trifle to the loss of God, and the soul to eternity; so you cannot but imagine, that the cares, fears, and solicitudes

ſolicitudes of ſouls about theſe things, are much, very much beyond yours. Let us compare the caſes, and ſee how they anſwer to each other.

You have evidences for your eſtates, and by them you hold what you have in the world. They alſo have evidences for their eſtate in Chriſt, and glory to come; they hold all *in capite*, by virtue of their intermarriage with Jeſus Chriſt; they come to be eſtated in that glorious inheritance, contained in the Covenant of grace. You have the tenure in that Scripture, 1 *Cor.* 3.22, 23. All is yours, for ye are Chriſts, and Chriſt is Gods. Faith unites them to him; and after they believe, they are ſealed by the Spirit of promiſe, *Eph.* 1. 13. They can lay claim to no promiſe upon any other ground; this is their title to all that they own as theirs. 1.

It often falls out, that after the ſealing and executing of your Deeds or Leaſes, an adverſary finds ſome dubious clauſe in them, and thereupon commences a Suit of Law with you. Thus it frequently falls out with the people of God, who after their believing and ſealing time, have doubts and ſcruples raiſed in them about their title. Nothing is more common, than for the Devil and their own unbelief to ſtart controverſies, and raiſe ſtrong objections againſt their intereſt in Chriſt, and the Covenant of promiſes. Theſe are cunning and potent adverſaries, and do maintain long debates with the gracious ſoul, and reaſon ſo cunningly and ſophiſtically with it, that it can by no means extricate and ſatisfie it ſelf; always alledging that their title is worth nothing, which they poor ſouls are but too apt to ſuſpect. 2.

All the while that a Suit in Law is depending about your title, you have but a little comfort or benefit from your eſtate; you cannot look upon it as your own, nor lay out moneys in building or dreſſing, for fear you ſhould loſe all at laſt. Juſt thus ſtands the caſe with doubting Chriſtians, they have little comfort from the moſt comfortable promiſes, little benefit from the ſweeteſt duties and Ordinances; they put off their own comforts, and ſay, If we were ſure that all this were ours, we could then rejoyce in them: But alaſs! our title is dubious, Chriſt is a precious Chriſt, the promiſes are com- 3.

fortable things, but what if they be none of ours? Ah! how little doth the doubting Chriſtian make of his large and rich inheritance?

4. You dare not truſt your own judgments in ſuch caſes, but ſtate your caſe to ſuch as are learned in the Laws; and are willing to get the ableſt counſel you can to adviſe you: So are poor doubting Chriſtians, they carry their Caſes from Chriſtian to Chriſtian, and from Miniſter to Miniſter, with ſuch requeſts as theſe; Pray tell me what do you think of my condition? deal plainly and faithfully with me, theſe be my grounds of doubting, and theſe my grounds of hope. O hide nothing from me! And if they all agree that their caſe is good, yet they cannot be ſatisfied till God ſay ſo too, and confirm the word of his ſervants; and therefore they carry the caſe often before him, in ſuch words as thoſe, *Pſal.* 139. 23, 24. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and ſee if there be any way of wickedneſs in me.*

5. You have little quiet in your ſpirits, till the caſe be reſolved, your meat and drink doth you little good; you cannot ſleep in the night, becauſe theſe troubled thoughts are ever returning upon you: What if I ſhould be turned out of all at laſt? So it is with gracious ſouls, their eyes are held waking in the night, by reaſon of the troubles of their hearts, *Pſal.* 77. 4. Such fears as theſe are frequently returning upon their hearts. What if I ſhould be found a ſelf-deceiver at laſt? What if I do but hug a phantaſm inſtead of Chriſt? how can this, or that, conſiſt with grace? their meat and drink doth them little good; their bodies are often macerated, by the troubles of their ſouls.

6. You will not make the beſt of your condition, when you ſtate your caſe to a faithful Councellor; neither will they, but oft times (poor penſive ſouls) they make it much worſe than indeed it is; charge themſelves with that which God never charged them with, though this be neither their wiſdom nor their duty; but the fears of miſcarrying make them ſuſpect fraud in all they do or have.

7. Laſtly, when your title is cleared, your hearts are eaſed; yea,

yea, not only eaſed, but overjoyed; though not in that degree, nor with the ſame kind of joy, that the hearts of Chriſtians are overflowed, when the Lord ſpeaks peace to their ſouls. O welcome the ſweet morning light, after a tedious night of darkneſs; now they can eat their bread with comfort, and drink their wine (yea if it be but water) with a merry heart, *Eccleſ.* 9.7.

REFLECTION.

1. The careleſs ſouls Reflection.

O How hath my ſpirit been toſſed, and hurried, when I have met with troubles and clamors about my eſtate! but as for ſpiritual troubles, and thoſe ſoul-perplexing caſes that Chriſtians ſpeak of, I underſtand but little of them. I never called my everlaſting ſtate in queſtion, nor brake an hours ſleep upon any ſuch account. Ah, my ſupine and careleſs ſoul! little haſt thou regarded how matters ſtand, in reference to eternity! I have ſtrongly conceited, but never throughly examined the validity of my title to Chriſt and his promiſes; nor am I able to tell, if my own conſcience ſhould demand whereupon my claim is grounded.

O my ſoul! why art thou ſo unwilling to examine how matters ſtand betwixt God and thee? art thou afraid to look into thy condition? leſt by *finding* thine *hypocriſie*, thou ſhouldſt *loſe* thy *peace*; or rather thy ſecurity. To what purpoſe will it be to ſhut thine eyes againſt the light of conviction, unleſs thou couldſt alſo find out a way to prevent thy *condemnation?* thou ſeeſt other ſouls, how attentively they wait under the word, for any thing that may ſpeak to their conditions. Doubtleſs thou haſt heard how frequently and ſeriouſly they have ſtated their conditions, and opened their caſes to the Miniſters of Chriſt. But thou, O my ſoul! haſt no ſuch caſes to put, no doubts to be reſolved; thou wilt leave all to the deciſion of the great day, and not trouble thy ſelf about it now. Well, God will decide it, but little to thy comfort.

2. The doubting ſouls Reflection.

I have heard how ſome have been perplexed by litigious adverſaries, but I believe none have been ſo toſſed with fears,

fears, and distracted with doubts, as I have been about the state of my soul. Lord, what shall I do? I have often carried my doubts and scruples to thine Ordinances, waiting for satisfaction to be spoken there. I have carried them to those I have judged skilful and faithful, begging their resolution and help, but nothing will stick. Still my fears are daily renewed. O my God do thou decide my case! tell me how the state stands betwixt thee and me; my days consume in trouble, I can neither do, or enjoy any good, whilst things are thus with me; all my earthly enjoyments are dry and uncomfortable things; yea, which is much worse, all my duties and thine Ordinances prove so too, by reason of the troubles of my heart I am no ornament to my profession, nay, I am a discouragement and stumbling-block to others! I will hearken and hear what God the Lord will speak, O that it might be peace! if thou do not speak it none can; and when thou doest, keep thy servant from returning again to folly, lest I make fresh work for an accusing conscience, and give new matter to the adversary of my soul!

3. The assured Christians Reflection.

But thou (my soul) enjoyest a double mercy from thy bountiful God, who hath not only given thee a good title, but also the clear evidence and knowledge thereof. I am gathering, and daily feeding upon the full ripe fruits of assurance, which grow upon the top boughs of faith, whilst many of my poor brethren drink their own tears, and have their teeth broken with gravel stones. Lord, thou hast set my soul upon her high places, but let me not exalt my self, because thou hast exalted me; nor grow wanton because I walk at liberty, lest for the abuse of such precious liberty, thou clap my old chains upon me, and shut up my soul again in prison.

The *Poem*.

MEn can't be quiet till they be assur'd
That their estate is good, and well secur'd.
To able Counsel they their Deed submit
Intreating them with care t'examine it

Fearing

Fearing some clause an enemy may wrest,
Or find a flaw; whereby he may devest
Them, and their children. O who can but see
How wise men in their generation be! Luke 16. 8.
But do they (1) equal care and fears express (1) Act. 18.17.
About their everlasting happiness?
In spiritual things 'twould grieve ones heart to see
What (2) careless souls, these careful men can be. (2) Isa. 32. 9. 10, 11.
They act like men of common sense bereaven,
Secure their Lands; and they'l trust God for heaven.
How many cases have you to submit,
To Lawyers judgments? (3) Ministers may sit (3) Hos. 11.2.
From week to week, and yet not see the face
Of one that brings a soul-contending Case.
Yea, which is worse; how seldom do you cry
To God for counsel (4) or beg him to try (4) Psal. 139. 23.
Your hearts; and strictly inquisition make
Into your state, discover your mistake.

O stupid souls! clouded with ignorance,
Is Christ, and heaven no (5) fair inheritance (5) Phil. 3. 8, 9.
Compar'd with yours? or is (6) eternity (6) 2 Cor. 4, 18
A shorter term than yours? that you should ply
The one so close, and totally neglect
The other; as not worth your least respect.
Perhaps the Devil whose plot from you's conceal'd,
Perswades your title's good; and firmly seal'd
By God's own Spirit, though you never found
One act of saving grace (7) to lay a ground (7) Eph. 1. 13.
For that perswasion. Soul he hath thee fast,
Though he'l not let thee know it till the last.

Lord waken sinners, make them understand
'Twixt thee, and them; how ravly matters stand.
Give them no quiet rest, until they see
Their souls secur'd, better than Lands can be.

Occasional Meditations

upon

BIRDS, BEASTS, TREES, FLOWERS, RIVERS, and other objects.

MEDITATIONS *on* BIRDS.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the singing of a Nightingale.

WHO that hears such various, ravishing, and exquisite melody, would imagine the bird that makes it, to be of so small and contemptible a body, and feather? her charming voice ingaged not only mine attentive ear, but my feet also, to make a nearer approach to that shady bush, in which that excellent Musician sate veiled; and the nearer I came, the sweeter the melody still seemed to be, [illegible] when I had described the bird her self, and found her [illegible] bigger, and no better feathered than a sparrow, it [illegible] thoughts the occasion of this following application.

This Bird seems to me the lively emblem of the formal hypocrite. (a) In that she is more in sound than substance, a loud

a loud and excellent voice, but a little despicable body; and it recall'd to my thoughts the story of *Plutarch*, who hearing a Nightingale, desired to have one killed to feed upon, not questioning but she would please the pallat as well as the ear; but when the Nightingale was brought him, and he saw what a poor little creature it was, truly said he, thou art *vox & præterea nihil*, a meer voice and nothing else: So is the hypocrite; did a man hear him sometimes in more publick duties and discourses, O thinks he, what an excellent man is this! what a choice and rare spirit is he of? but follow him home, observe him in his private conversation and retirements, and then you will judge *Plutarchs* note as applicable to him as the Nightingale. (2) This Bird is observed to charm most sweetly, and set her spirits all on work, when she perceives she hath ingaged attention; so doth the hypocrite, who lives and feeds upon the applause and commendation of his admirers, and cares little for any of those duties which bring in no returns of praise from men; he is little pleased with a silent melody and private pleasure betwixt God and his own soul.

Scire tuum nihil est nisi te scire hoc sciat alter.
Alas! his knowledge is not worth a pin,
If he proclaim not what he hath within.

He is more for the Theatre than the Closet, and of such Christ saith, Verily they have their reward. (3) *Naturalists* observe the Nightingale to be an ambitious Bird, that cannot endure to be out-vied by any, she will rather chuse to die than be be excell'd; a notable instance whereof we have in the following pleasant Poem, translated out of *Strada*; concerning the Nightingale and a Lutanist.

Now the declining Sun [illegible] bend
From higher heavens, [illegible] his locks did send
A milder flame, when neer [illegible] flow
A Lutanist alayed his careful wo,

With ſounding charms, and in a greeny ſeat
Of ſhady Oak, took ſhelter from the heat
A Nightingale o'reheard him, that did uſe
To ſojourn in the neighbour Groves, the Muſe
That fill'd the place, the Syren of the wood
(Poor harmleſs Syren) ſtealing near ſhe ſtood
Cloſe lurking in the leaves attentively
Recording that unwonted melody.
She con'd it to her ſelf, and every ſtrain
His fingers play'd, her throat return'd again.
The Lutaniſt perceiv'd an anſwer ſent
From th'imitating Bird, and was content
To ſhew her play, more fully, then in haſte;
He tries his Lute and giving her a taſt
Of the inſuing quarrel, nimbly beats
On all his ſtrings, as nimbly ſhe repeats
And wildly ranging o're a thouſand keys
Sounds a ſhrill warning of her after layes;
With rowling hand the Lutaniſt then plyes
The trembling threds ſometimes in ſcornful wiſe
He bruſhes down the ſtrings and ſtrikes them all
With one even ſtroke, then takes them ſeveral
And culls them o're again, his ſparkling joynts
With buſie deſcant mincing on the points
Reach back again with nimble touch, then ſtayes.
The Bird replies, and art with art repaies.
Sometimes as one unexpert, and in doubt
How ſhe might weild her voice, ſhe draweth out
Her tone at large, and doth at firſt prepare
A ſolemn ſtrain nor wear'd with winding air,
But with an equal pitch, and conſtant throat
Makes clear the paſſage for her gliding note;
Then croſs diviſion diverſly ſhe playes
And loudly chanting out her quickeſt layes
Poyſes the ſound, and with a quivering voice
Falls back again: He wondring how ſo choice
So various harmony could iſſue out
From ſuch a little throat, doth go about

Some harder Leſſons, and with wondrous art
Changing the ſtrings doth up the treble dart
And downward ſmites the baſe, with painful ſtroke
He beats; and as the Trumpet doth provoke
Sluggards to fight, even ſo his wanton skill
With mingled diſcord joyns the hoarſe and ſhrill,
The Bird this alſo tunes, and whilſt ſhe cuts
Sharp notes with mingled voice, and mingled puts
Meaſures of middle ſound, then ſuddenly
She thunders deep and jugs it inwardly
With gentle murmur, clear and dull ſhe ſings
By courſe, as when the martial warning rings;
Believ't the Minſtril bluſht, with angry mood
Inflam'd (quoth he) thou Chantreſs of the wood
Either from thee I'le bear the price away
Or vanquiſht, break my Lute without delay.
Unimitable accents then he ſtrains
His hand flies on the ſtrings, in one he chains
Far different numbers, chaſing here and there
And all the ſtring he labours every where;
Both flat and ſharp he ſtrikes, and ſtately grows
To prouder ſtrains, and backward as he goes
Doubly divides, and cloſing up his layes
Like a full Quire, a ſhivering conſort playes;
Then pauſing ſtood in expectation
Of his corrival, nor durſt anſwer on.
But ſhe, when practice long her throat had whet
Enduring not to yield, at once doth ſet
Her Spirits all to work, and all in vain;
For whilſt ſhe labours to expreſs again
With Natures ſimple voice ſuch divers keys
With ſlender pipes ſuch lofty notes as theſe
O're matcht with high deſigns, o'rematcht with wo,
Juſt at the laſt encounter of her foe
She faints, ſhe dyes, falls on his inſtrument
That conquer'd her, a fitting monument.
So far even little Souls are driven on
Struck with a vertuous emulation.

And even as far are hypocrites driven on by their ambition and pride, which is the spur that provokes them in their religious duties.

MEDIT. II.

Upon the sight of many small Birds chirping about a dead Hawk.

HEaring a whole Quire of Birds chirping and twinking together, it ingaged my curiosity a little to inquire into the occasion of that convocation, which mine eyes quickly informed me of; for I perceived a dead Hawk in the bush, about which they made such a noise, seeming to triumph at the death of their enemy; and I could not blame them to sing his knell, who like a *Canibal* was wont to feed upon their living bodies; tearing them limb from limb, and scaring them with his frightful appearance. This Bird which living, was so formidable, being dead the pooreſt Wren or Titmouse fears not to chirp or hop over him. This brings to my thoughts the base and ignoble ends of the greatest Tyrants and greedy ingrossers of the world, of whom (whilst living) men were more afraid than birds of a Hawk, but dead became objects of contempt and scorn. The death of such Tyrants is both inglorious and unlamented; *When the wicked perish there is shouting*, Prov. 11. 10. Which was exemplified to the life at the death of *Nero*, of whom the Poet thus sings,

Cum mors crudelem rapuisset saeva Neronem
Credibile est multos Romam agitasse jocos.
When cruel *Nero* dy'd th'Historian tells.
How *Rome* did mourn with Bonefires, Playes and Bells.

Remarkable for contempt and shame have the ends of many bloudy Tyrants been; so *Pompey* the great, of whom *Claudian* the Poet sings,

Nudus

Nudus paſcit aves, jacet en qui poſſidet orbem
Exiguæ telluris inops———————
Birds eat his fleſh, lo now he cannot have
Who rul'd the world, a ſpace to make a grave.

The like is ſtoried of *Alexander* the great, who lay unburied thirty dayes, and *William* the Conqueror, with many other ſuch Birds of prey; whilſt a beneficial and holy life is uſually cloſed up in an honourable and much lamented death.

For my own part, I wiſh I may ſo order my converſation in the world, that I may live when I am dead in the affections of the beſt, and leave an honourable teſtimony in the conſciences of the worſt; that I may oppreſs none, do good to all, and ſay when I dye, as good *Ambroſe* did, I am neither aſhamed to live, nor afraid to dye.

MEDIT. III.

Upon the ſight of a Black-bird taking ſanctuary in a buſh from a purſuing Hawk.

WHen I ſaw how hardly the poor bird was put it to ſave her ſelf from her enemy, who hover'd juſt over the Buſh in which ſhe was fluttering and ſqueeking, I could not but haſten to relieve her, (pity and ſuccour being a due debt to the diſtreſſed) which when I had done, the Bird would not depart from the buſh, though her enemy were gone; this act of kindneſs was abundantly repayed by this Meditation, with which I returned to my walk. My ſoul like this Bird, was once diſtreſſed, purſued, yea, ſeized by Satan, who had certainly made a prey of it, had not Jeſus Chriſt been a Sanctuary to it in that hour of danger. How ready did I find him to receive my poor ſoul into his protection? then did he make good that ſweet promiſe to my experience, Thoſe that come

come unto me, I will in no wise cast out. It call'd to mind that pretty and pertinent story of the Philosoper, who walking in the fields a Bird pursued by a Hawk, flew into his bosom; he took her out, and said, *Poor Bird, I will neither wrong thee, nor expose thee to thine enemy, since thou cameſt unto me for refuge.* So tender, and more than so, is the Lord Jesus to distressed souls that come unto him. Blessed Jesus! how should I love and praise thee? glorifie and admire thee, for that great Salvation thou hast wrought for me. If this Bird had faln into the claws of her enemy, she had been torn to pieces indeed, and devoured, but then a few minutes had dispatch'd her, and ended all her pain and misery; but had my soul fallen into the hands of Satan, there had been no end of its misery.

Would not this scared Bird be flusht out of the Bush that secured her, though I had chased away her enemy? and wilt thou (my soul) ever be enticed or scared from Christ thy refuge? O let this for ever ingage thee to keep close to Christ, and make me say with *Ezrah*; and now, O Lord! since thou hast given me such a deliverance as this, should I again break thy commandments.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon the sight of divers Lennets intermingling with a flock of Sparrows.

METhinks these Birds do fitly resemble the gaudy Gallant, and the plain Pesants; how spruce and richly adorned with shining and various coloured feathers, (like scarlet, richly laid with gold and silver lace) are those? how plainly clad, in a home-spun countrey russet are these? Fine feathers (saith our Proverb) make proud birds; and yet the feathers of the Sparrow, are as useful and beneficial, both for warmth and flight, though not so gay and ornamental as the others; and if both were stript out of their feathers

thers, the Sparrow would prove the better Bird of the two; by which I ſee, that the greateſt worth doth not alwaies lye under the fineſt cloaths. And beſides, God can make mean and homely garments as uſeful and beneficial to poor deſpiſed Chriſtians, as the ruffling and ſhining garments of wanton Gallants are to them, and when God ſhall ſtrip men out of all external excellencies, theſe will be found to excel their glittering neighbours, in true worth and excellency.

Little would a man think ſuch rich treaſures of grace, wiſdom, humility, &c. lay under ſome ruſſet coats;

Sæpe ſub attrita latitat ſapientia veſte.
Under poor garments more true worth may be,
Than under ſilks that whiſtle, who but he?

Whilſt on the other ſide, the heart of the wicked (as *Solomon* hath obſerved) is little worth, how much ſoever his cloaths be worth. Alas! it falls out too frequently among us, as it doth with men in the *Indies*, who walk over the rich veins of gold and ſilver Oar, which lies under a ragged and barren ſurface, and know it not. For my own part, I deſire not to value any man by what is extrinſecal and worldly, but by that true internal excellency of grace, which makes the face to ſhine in the eyes of God and good men: I would contemn a vile perſon, though never ſo glorious in the eye of the world; but honour ſuch as fear the Lord, how ſordid and deſpicable ſoever to appearance.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the ſight of a Robbin-red-breaſt picking up a worm from a Mole-hill then raiſing.

OBſerving the Mole working induſtriouſly beneath, and the Bird watching ſo intently above; I made a ſtand to obſerve the iſſue. When in a little time the Bird deſcends and ſeizes

seizes upon a worm, which I perceived was crawling apace from the enemy below that hunted her, but fell to the share of another which from above waited for her. My thoughts presently suggested these Meditations from that occasion; me thought this poor worm seem'd to be the Emblem of my poor soul, which is more endangered by its own lusts of pride and covetousness, than this worm was by the Mole and Bird; my pride, like the aspiring Bird watching for it above; my covetousness, like this subterranean Mole, digging for it beneath. Poor soul! what a sad Dilemma art thou brought to? If thou go down into the caverns of the earth, there thou art a prey to thy covetousness that hunts thee; and if thou aspire, or but creep upward, there thy pride waits to ensnare thee. Distressed soul! whither wilt thou go? ascend thou mayest, not by a vain elation, but by a heavenly conversation, beside which, there is no way for thy preservation; the way of life is above to the wise, &c.

Again, I could not but observe the accidental benefit this poor harmless Bird obtained by the labour of the Mole, who hunting intentionally for her self, unburroughed and ferrited out this worm for the Bird, who possibly was hungy enough, and could not have been relieved for this time but by the Mole, the fruit of whose labour she now fed upon. Even thus the Lord oft-times makes good his word to his people: *The wealth of the wicked is laid up for the just.* And again, *The earth shall help the woman.* This was fully exemplified in *David*, to whom *Nabal* that churlish muck-worm speaks all in possessives. Shall I take my bread &c. and give it to one I know not whom; and yet *David* reaps the fruit of all the pains and toyl of *Nabal* at last. Let it never incourage me to idleness, that God sometimes gives his people the fruit of others sweat; but if Providence reduce me to necessity, and disable me from helping my self, I doubt not then but it will provide instruments to do it. The Bird was an hungry and could not dig.

MEDIT.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon the shooting of two Finches fighting in the Air.

HOw soon hath death ended the quarrel betwixt these two little Combatants! had they agreed better, they might have lived longer; 'twas their own contention, that gave both the opportunity and provocation of their death; and though living they could not, yet being dead they can lye quietly together in my hand.

Foolish Birds, was it not enough that Birds of prey watched to devour them, but they must peck and scratch one another? Thus have I seen the Birds of Paradise (Saints I mean) tearing or wounding each other, like so many birds of prey; and by their unchristian contests giving the occasion of their commom ruine; yea, and that not only when at liberty, as these were, but when incaged also; and yet, as one well observes, if ever Christians will agree, 'twill either be in a prison, or in heaven; for in a prison their quarrelsome lusts lye low, and in heaven they shall be utterly done away.

But O! what pity is it, that those who shall agree so perfectly in heaven, should bite and devour each other upon earth? that it should be said of them, as one ingeniously observed who saw their carcases lye together, as if they had lovingly embraced each other, who fell together by a Duel, *Quanta amicitia se in vicem amplectuntur; qui mutua & implacabili inimicitia perierunt?*

Imbracing one another, now they lye
Who by each others bloody hands did dye.

Or as he said, who observed how quietly and peaceably dust and bones, even of enemies did lye together in the grave; *Non tanta vivi pace conjuncti essetis*; you did not live together so peaceably. If conscience of Christs command will not, yet the consideration of common safety should powerfully perswade to unity and amity.

MEDIT. VII.

Upon the singing of a blind Finch by night.

A Dear friend, who was a great observer of the works of God in nature, told me, That being entertain'd with a sight of many rarities at a friends house in *London*; among other things, his friend shewed him a Finch, whose eyes being put out, would frequently sing at midnight. This Bird in my opinion, is the lively Emblem of such careless and unconcerned persons, as the Prophet describes, *Amos* 6.4,5,6. who chant to the viol, when a dismal night of trouble and affliction hath overshadowed the Church. You would have thought it strange to have heard this Bird sing in the night, when all others are in a deep silence; except the Owl, an unclean Bird, and the Nightingal which before we made the Emblem of the Hypocrite. And as strange it is, that any except the profane and hypocritical, should so unseasonably express their mirth and jollity; that any of *Sions* children should live in pleasure, whilst she her self lies in tears. The people of God in *Psal.* 137. tell us in what postures of sorrow they sate; even like Birds, with their heads under their wings, during the night of their Captivity. *How shall we sing the Lords song in a strange Land?* 'Tis like enough, such as can sing and chaunt in the night of the Churches trouble, have well feathered their nests in the days of her prosperity; however let them know, that God will turn their unseasonable mirth into a sadder note; and those that now sit sad and silent, shall shortly sing for joy of heart, when the winter is past, the rain over and gone, the flowers appear again upon the earth, and the time of the singing of Birds is come.

MEDIT.

MEDIT. VIII.

Upon the comparing of two Birds nests.

'Tis pretty to observe the structure and commodiousness of the habitations of these little architects, who though they act not by reason and counsel, but only by natural instinct, yet reason it self could hardly have contrived a neater building of such simple materials. How neatly hath the Thrush ceiled or plastered his nest with admirable art and industry? how warmly hath the Finch matted his? and both well fenced against the injury of the weather.

How comfortably hath nature provided convenient habitations, for these weak and tender young ones, who have warm lodging, and variety of provision hourly brought them, without their care and pains? This trifling object suggests to my thoughts, a more excellent and serious contemplation, even the wonderful and unparallel'd abasement of *Jesus Christ*, who for my sake voluntarily submitted himself to a more destitute and neglected state, than these Birds of the Air; for *Mat.* 8. 20. he saith, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.*

Hinc. in loc.

Vulpibus in saltu rupis excisa latebras
Præbet, & aereis avibus dat silva quietem:
Ast hominis Nato nullis succedere tectis
Est licitum — — — — — —
The craggy rock to foxes holes affords,
The pleasant woods, a resting place to birds,
For Christ no fixed habitation's found
But what was borrowed, or the naked ground.

O melting consideration! that the glorious Son of God, *Joh.* 1. 14. *The Lord of Glory*, Jam. 2. 1. *The brightness of his fathers glory.* Heb. 1. 3. *Who was rich*, 2 Cor. 8. 9. *And*

thought it no robbery to be equal with God. Phil. 2.8. who from *all eternity* was infinitely and ineffably *delighting and rejoycing in the bosome of his father*, Prov. 8.30. That he, I say, should manifest himself *in flesh*, 2 *Tim.* 3.16. yea, *in the likeness of sinful flesh*, Rom. 8.3. that is, in flesh, that had the marks and effects of sin upon it, as hunger, thirst, pain, weariness and mortality; and not only so, but to chuse such a state of outward meanness and poverty, never being possessed of a house in this world; but living as a stranger in other mens houses, and stooping in this respect to a lower condition than the very birds of the Air, and all this for enemies. O let it work both admiration and thankfulness in my soul! my body is better accommodated than the body of my Lord. Dear Jesus! by how much the viler thou madest thy self for me, by so much the dearer shalt thou be to me.

Quanto pro me vilior, tanto mihi Charior. Bern.

MEDIT. IX.

Upon the early singing of Birds.

HOw am I reproved of sluggishness by these watchful Birds! which cheerfully entertain the very dawning of the morning, with their cheerful and delighful warblings! they set their little spirits all awork betimes, whilst my nobler spirits are bound with the bonds of soft and downy slumbers. For shame my soul! suffer not that Publican sleep to seize so much of thy time, yea, thy best and freshest time; reprove and chide thy sluggish body, as a good Bishop once did, when upon the same occation he said, *Surrexerent passeres & stertunt Pontifices.*

The early chirping Sparrows may reprove
Such lazy Bishops as their beds do love.

Of many sluggards it may be said, as *Tully* said of *Verres*, the Deputy of *Sicily*, *Quod nunquam solem nec orientem, nec occidentem viderat*, that he never saw the Sun rising, being in bed after, nor setting, being in bed before.

'Tis

'Tis pity that Christians of all men should suffer sleep to cut such large thongs out of so narrow a hide, as their time on earth is. But alas! it is not so much early rising, as a wise improving those fresh and free hours with God, that will inrich the soul; else, as our Proverb saith, a man may be early up, and never the near; yea, far better it is to be found in bed sleeping, than to be up doing nothing, or that which is worse than nothing. O my soul! learn to prepossess thy self every morning with the thoughts of God, and suffer not those fresh and sweet operations of thy mind, to be prostituted to earthly things; for that is experimentally true which one in this case hath pertinently observed; That if the world get the start of Religion in the morning, it will be hard for Religion to overtake it all the day after.

Mr. *Cas* in Epist. to the Morn. Lect.

MEDIT. X.

Upon the haltering of birds with a grain of hair.

Observing in a snowy season, how the poor hungry Birds were haltred and drawn in by a grain of hair cunningly cast over their heads, whilst poor creatures they were busily feeding, and suspected no danger; and even whilst their companions were drawn away from them, one after another, all the interruption it gave the rest, was only for a minute or two, whist they stood peeping into that hole through which their companions were drawn, and then fell to their meat again, as busily as before. I could not chuse but say, even thus surprizingly doth death steal upon the children of men, whilst they are wholly intent upon the cares and pleasures of this life, not at all suspecting its so near approach. These Birds saw not the hand that insnared them, nor do they see the hand of death plucking them one after another into the grave.

Ovid

Ovid. *Omnibus obscuras injicit illa manus*
Death's steps are swift, and yet no noise it makes;
Its hand unseen, but yet most surely takes.

And even as the surviving Birds for a little time seemed to stand affrighted, peeping after their companions, and then as busie as ever to their meat again: Just so it fares with the careless inconsiderate world, who sees others daily dropping into eternity round about them, and for the present are a little startled, and will look into the grave after their neighbours, and then fall as busily to their earthly imployments and pleasures again as ever, till their own turn comes.

I know, my God! that I must die as well as others; but, O let me not die as do others, let me see death before I feel it, and conquer it before it kill me; let it not come as an enemy upon my back, but rather let me meet it as a friend halfway! Dye I must, but let me lay up that good treasure before I go, *Mat. 6. 19.* carry with me a good conscience when I go, *2 Tim. 4. 6, 7.* and leave behind me a good example when I am gone, and then let death come and welcom!

MEDITATIONS upon Beasts.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the clogging of a straying Beast.

HAd this Bullock contented himself, and remained quietly within his own bounds, his owner had never put such an heavy clog upon his neck: but I see the prudent Husbandman chuses rather to keep him with his clog, than lose him for want of one. What this clog is to him, that is affliction and trouble to me; had my soul kept close with God in liberty and prosperity, he would never thus have clogged me

me with adversity; yea, and happy were it for me, if I might stray from God no more, who hath thus clogged me with preventive afflictions. If with *David* I might say, *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word*, *Psal.* 119. 67. O my soul! 'tis better for thee to have thy pride clogged with poverty, thy ambition with reproach, thy carnal expectancies with constant disappointments; than to be at liberty to run from God and duty.

'Tis true, I am sometimes as weary of these troubles, as this poor Beast is of the clog he draws after him, and often wish my self rid of them; but yet, if God should take them off, for ought I know I might have cause to wish them on again, to prevent a greater mischief. 'Tis storied of *Basil*, that for many years he was sorely afflicted with an inveterate head-ach, (that was his clog) he often prayed for the removal of it, at last God removed it; but instead thereof he was sorely exercised with the motions and temptations of lust, which when he perceived, he as earnestly desired his head-ach again, to prevent a greater evil. Lord! if my corruptions may be prevented by my affliction, I refuse not to be clogged with them; but my soul rather desires thou wouldst hasten the time when I shall be for ever freed from them both.

MEDIT. II.

Upon the love of a Dog to his Master.

HOw many a weary step through mire and dirt hath this poor Dog followed my horse heels to day? and all this for a very poor reward, for all he gets by it at night, is but bones and blows, yet will he not leave my company, but is content upon such hard terms to travel with me from day to day.

O my soul! what conviction and shame might this leave upon thee? who art often times weary of following thy Master *Christ*, whose rewards and incouragements of obedience

dience are so incomparably sweet and sure. I cannot beat back this dog from following me, but every inconsiderable trouble is enough to discourage me in the way of my duty. Ready I am to resolve as that Scribe did, *Mat.* 1. 19. *Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest*; but how doth my heart faulter when I must encounter with the difficulties of the way? O! let me make a whole heart-choice of Christ, for my portion and happiness! and then I shall never leave him, nor turn back from following him, though the present difficulties were much more, and the present incouragements much less.

MEDIT. III.

Upon the fighting of two Rams.

TAking notice how furiously these Sheep which by nature are mild and gentle, did like bulls push each other, taking their advantage by going back to meet with a greater rage and fury. Methought I saw in this a plain Emblem of the unchristian contests and animosities which fall out amongst them that call themselves the people of God, who in Scripture are also stiled Sheep, for their meekness and innocency; and yet, through the remaining corruptions that are in them, thus do they push each other; (as one long since complained) *non secus ac,*

Cum duo conversis inimica in prælia tauri,
Frontibus incurrunt.
Shall Christians one another wound and push,
Like furious Bulls, when they together rush?

The fighting of these Sheep do in two respects, notably comport with the sinful practices of contending Christians, (1) That in this fight they ingage with their heads one against another; and what are they but those head-notions

or

or oppoſition of Sciences, falſely ſo called, that have made ſo many broyls and uproars in the Chriſtian world? Oh! What claſhings have theſe heady opinions cauſed in the Churches? firſt heads, and then hearts have claſhed. Chriſtians have not diſtinguiſhed betwixt *adverſarius litis*, & *perſonæ*; an adverſary to the *opinion*, and to the *perſons*; but dipt their tongues and pens in vinegar and gall, ſhamefully aſperſing and reproaching one another becauſe their underſtandings were not caſt into one mould, and their heads all of a bigneſs. But (2) that which Countrey-men obſerve from the ſighting of Sheep, *That it preſages foul and ſtormy weather*, is much more certainly conſequent upon the fighting of Chriſts Sheep. Do theſe claſh and puſh? Surely *it is an infallible prognoſtick of an enſuing ſtorm*, Mal. 4. 6.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon the catching of a Horſe in a fat Paſture.

WHen this Horſe was kept in poor ſhort leas, where he had much ſcope, but little graſs, how gentle and tractable was he then? he would not only ſtand quiet to be taken, but come to hand of his own accord, and follow me up and down the field for a cruſt of bread, or handful of Oats; but ſince I turned him into this fat paſture, he comes no more to me, nor will ſuffer me to come neer him; but throws up his heels wantonly againſt me, and flies from me, as if I were rather his *enemy* than *Benefactor*. In this I behold the carriage of my own heart towards God, who the more he hath done for me, the ſeldomer doth he hear from me: in a low and afflicted ſtate, how tractable is my heart to duty? Then it comes to the foot of God voluntarily; but in an exalted condition, how wildly doth my heart run from God and duty? With this ungrateful requital God faulted his own people, *Jer.* 2. 31. teachable and tractable in the *wilderneſs*, but when fatted in that rich paſture *Canaan*, then, *we are Lords*,

we will come no more to thee. How soon are all Gods former benefits forgotten? and how often is that ancient observation verified, even in his own people.

Μετὰ τὴν δόσιν τάχιστα γηράσκει χάρις.
Post munera cito conseneſcit gratia.
No sooner do we gifts on some bestow,
But presently our gifts gray-headed grow.

But that's a bad Tenant that will maintain a Suit at Law against his Landlord, with his own Rent; and a bad heart that will fight against God with his own mercies. I wish it may be with my heart, as it is reported to be with the waters in the Kingdom of *Congo*, that are never so sweet to the taste, as when the tide is at the highest.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the hunting of a Deer.

THe full-mouthed cry of these Dogs, which from the morning hath hunted this poor tired Deer, which is now no longer able to stand before them, but is compassed round with them, who thirst for, and will presently suck her blood; brings to my thoughts the condition and state of *Jesus Christ*, in the days of his flesh, who was thus hunted from place to place by blood-thirsty enemies. Upon this very account, the 22*d. Psal.* which treats of his death, is inscribed with the title of *Aijeleth Shahar*, which signifies the *Hind of the morning* and fully imports the same notion, which this occasion presented me with; for look, as the *Hind* or *Deer* which is intended to be run down that day, is rouzed by the Dogs early in the morning. So was Christ, in the very morning of his infancy, by bloody *Herod*, and that cruel pack confederated with him. Thus was he chased from place to place, till that was fulfilled which was prophetically written of him in *verse* 16. of the forecited *Psalm*; *For Dogs have com-*

compassed me about, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.

And canst thou expect, O my soul! to fare better than he did, or escape the rage of bloudy men? Surely, if the Spirit of Christ dwell in thee; if his holiness have savoured thee, these Dogs will wind it and give thee chace too; they go upon the scent of holiness still, and would hunt to destruction every one, in whom there is *aliquid Christi*, any thing of Christ, if the gracious providence of the Lord did not sometimes rate them off. For it is no less a pleasure, which some wicked ones take in hunting the people of God, than what *Claudian* the *Poet* observes men use to take in hunting wild beasts.

Venator defessa thoro quum membra reponit
Mens tamen ad Sylvas, & sua lustra redit.
Whilst weary huntsmen in the night do sleep,
Their fancies in the woods still hunting keep.

Lord! should I with the hypocrite decline the profession and practice of holiness, to escape the rage of persecuting enemies, at what time they cease, my own conscience would begin to hunt me like a Blood-hound; let me rather chuse to be chased by men than God, to flee before pursuing enemies; than be dogged from day to day with a guilty conscience.

MEDITATIONS upon Trees.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the fall of blossoms, nipt by a frosty morning.

BEholding in an early Spring, fruit Trees embossed with beautiful blossoms of various colours, which breathed

forth the delicious odors into the circumambient air, and adorned the branches on which they grew, like so many rich jewels, or glittering pendents; and further observing, how these perfumed blossoms dropt off, being bitten with the frost and discoloured all the ground, as if a shower of snow had fallen; I said within my self, these sweet and early blossoms are not unlike my sweet and early affections to the Lord, in the dayes of my first acquaintance with him. Oh! what fervent love? panting desires, and heavenly delights beautified my soul in those dayes! the odoriferous scent of the sweetest blossoms, the morning breath of the most fragrant flowers, hath not half that sweetness with which those my first affections were inriched. Oh! happy time, thrice pleasant Spring! my soul hath it still in remembrance, and is humbled within me; for these also were but blossoms which now are nipt and faded, that first flourish is gone; my heart is like the Winters earth, because thy face, Lord, is to me like a Winter Sun. *Awake, O Northwind! and come, South wind, blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out, then let my beloved come into his garden and eat his pleasant fruit!*

MEDIT. II.

Upon the knitting or setting of fruit.

I Have often observed, that when the blossoms of a tree, set and knit, though the flourish thereof be gone, and nothing but the bare rudiment of the expected fruit be left; yet then the fruit is much better secured from the danger of frosts and winds, than whilst it remained in the flower or blossom; for now it hath past one of those *critical periods*, in which so many trees miscarry and lose their fruit. And methought, this *natural Observation* fairly led me to this *Theological Propesition. That good motions and holy purposes in the soul are never secured and past their most dangerous* Crisis, *till they*

they be turned into fixed resolutions, and answerable executions, which is as the knitting and setting of them.

Upon this Proposition my melting thoughts thus dilated, Happy had it been for thee, my soul! had all the blessed motions of the Spirit been thus knit and fixed in thee. O, how have mine affections blown and budded under the warm beams of the Gospel! but a chill blast from the cares, troubles and delights of the world without, and the vanity and deadness of the heart within have blasted all; my goodness hath been but as a morning dew, or early cloud that vanisheth away: And even of divine Ordinances I may say, what is said of humane Ordinances, *They have perished in the using.* A blossom is but *fructus imperfectus, & ordinabilis*, an imperfect thing in it self, and something in order to fruit; a good motion and holy purpose, is but *opus imperfectum, & ordinabile*, an imperfect work, in order to a compleat work of the Spirit, When that *primus impetus*, those first motions were strong upon my heart, and I then pursued them in the force and vigour of them, how many difficulties might I have overcome? Revive thy work, O Lord! and give not to my soul a miscarrying womb, or dry breasts.

MEDIT. III.

Upon the sight of a fair spreading Oak.

WHat a lofty flourishing Tree is here? It seems rather to be a little wood, than a single Tree; every limb thereof having the dimensions and branches of a Tree in it; and yet as great as it is, it was once but a little slip, which one might pluck up with two fingers; this vast body was contained virtually, and potentially in a small Acorn. Well then, I will never despise the day of small things, nor despair of arriving to an eminency of grace, though at present it is but as a broken reed, and the things that are in me, be ready to dye. As things in nature, so the things of the Spirit

Spirit grow up to their fulneſs and perfection, by ſlow and inſenſible degrees. The famous and heroical acts of the moſt renowned believers, were ſuch as themſelves could not once perform, or it may be think they ever ſhould. Great things both in nature and grace, come from ſmall and contemptible beginnings.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon the ſight of many ſticks lodged in the branches of a choice fruit Tree.

HOw is this Tree battered with ſtones and loaded with ſticks that have been thrown at it? whilſt thoſe that grow about it being barren, or bearing harſher fruit, eſcape uutouched! Surely, if its fruit had not been ſo good, its uſage had not been ſo bad: and yet it is affirmed, that ſome trees, as the Walnut, &c. bear the better, for being thus bruiſed and battered.

Even thus it fares, in both reſpects with the beſt of men; the more holy, the more envied and perſecuted; every one that paſſes by will have a fling at them. Methinks I ſee, how devils and wicked men walk round about the people of God whom he hath encloſed in arms of power, like ſo many boys about an Orchard, whoſe lips water to have a fling at them.

But God turns all the ſtones of reproach into precious ſtones. to his people, they bear the better for being thus batter'd.

And in them is that ancient obſervation verified.

Creſcunt virtutum palmæ, creſcuntque Coronæ;
Mutantur mundi prælia, pace Dei.
The Palms and Crowns of virtue thus increaſe;
Thus perſecution's turned into peace.

Let me be but fruitful to God in holineſs, and ever abounding in the work of the Lord, and then, whilſt devils and men are

are flinging at me, either by hand or tongue persecutions, I will sing amidst them all with the Divine Poet.

What open force, or hidden charm
Can blast my fruits, or bring me harm,
Whilst the inclosure is thine arm ?

Herb. Poem p. 125.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the gathering of choice fruit, from a scrubbed unpromising Tree.

WOuld any man think to find such rare delicious fruit upon such an unworthy Tree to appearance as this is ? I should rather have expected the most delicious fruit from the most handsome and flourishing Trees; but I see I must neither judge the worth of Trees or Men, by their external form and appearance. This is not the first time I have been deceived in judging by that rule; under fair and promising outsides I have found nothing of worth, and in many deformed despicable bodies, I have found precious and richly furnished souls. The sap and juice of this scubbed Tree is concocted into rare and excellent fruits, whilst the juice and sap of some other fair, but barren Trees, serves only to keep them from rotting, which is all the use that many souls which dwell in beautiful bodies serve for; they have (as one saith) *animam pro sale*; their souls are but salt to their bodies. Or thus,

The only use to which their souls do serve
Is but like salt, their bodies to preserve.

If God have given me a sound soul, in a sound body, I have a double mercy to bless him for; but whether my body be vigorous and beautiful or not, yet let my soul be so: For as the esteem of this Tree, so the esteem and true honour of every man rises rather from his fruitfulness and usefulness, than from his shape and form.

MEDIT.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon an excellent, but irregular Tree.

SEeing a Tree grow somewhat irregular, in a very neat Orchard, I told the owner it was pity that Tree should stand there; and that if it were mine I would root it up, and thereby reduce the Orchard to an exact uniformity. It was replyed to this purpose, that he rather regarded the *fruit* than the *form*; and that this slight inconveniency was abundantly preponderated by a more considerable advantage. This Tree, said he, which you would root up, hath yielded me more fruit than many of those Trees which have nothing else to commend them, but the regular scituation. I could not but yield to the reason of this answer, and could wish it had been spoken so loud, that all our Uniformity-men had heard it, who will not stick to root up many hundred of the best bearers in the Lords Orchard, because they stand not in an exact order with other more conformable, but less beneficial Trees, who do *perdere substantiam propter accidentia*, destroy the fruit, to preserve the form.

Not much unlike such foolish men are those
That strive for shadows, and the substance lose.

MEDITATIONS upon a Garden.

MEDIT. I.

Upon the new modelling of a Garden.

A Gentlewoman who had lately seen a neat and curious Garden, returns to her own with a greater dislike of it than ever; resolves to new model the whole plot, and reduce

duce it to better form, is now become so curious and neat, that not a weed or stone is suffered in it, but all must lye in exquisite order; and what ever ornament she had observed in her neighbours, she is now restless till she see it in her own.

Happy were it thought I, if in an holy emulation, every one would thus endeavour to rectifie the disorders of their own conversation, by the excellent graces they behold in the more heavenly and regular lives of others. Some Christians there are (I wish their number were greater) whose actions lye in such a comely and beautiful order, that few of their neighbours can look upon their examples without self-conviction and shame; but few are so happy to be provoked unto self-reformation by such rare patterns. I see, it is much easier to pull up many weeds out of a Garden, than one corruption out of the heart, and to procure an hundred flowers to adorn a knot, than one grace to beautifie the soul. 'Tis more natural to corrupt man to envy, than to imitate the spiritual excellencies of others.

MEDIT. II.

Upon the pulling up of a Leek.

A White head, and a green tail! how well doth this resemble an old wanton Lover! whose green youthful lusts are not extinguished, though his white head declares that nature is almost so. Gray hairs should be alwayes matched with grave deportments, and the sins of youth should rather be the griefs, than pleasures of old age. 'Tis sad when the sins of the soul, like the diseases of the body grow stronger, as nature grows weaker: And it recalls to my mind that ancient Observation of *Menander*.

Γέρων ἐραστὴς ἐσχάτη κακὴ τύκη.
Senex amore captus, ultimum malum
It is the worst of evils to behold
Strong youthful lusts to rage in one that's old.

'Tis a thousand pities, that those who have one foot in the grave should live as if the other were in hell! that their lusts should be so lively, when their bodies are three parts dead. Such sinful practices bring upon them more comtempt and shame, than their hoary heads and reverend faces can procure them honour.

Ovid. 5. Fast. *Magna fuit capitis quondam reverentia cani,*
Inque suo pretio ruga senilis erat.
Gray hairs, and aged wrinckles did of old
Procure more reverence than bags of Gold.

But alas! how little respect or reverence can the hoary head obtain amongst wise men, except it be found in the way of righteousnes? I think, the lowest esteem is too much for an old servant of the Devil; and the highest honour little enough for an ancient and faithful servant of Christ.

MEDIT. III.

Upon a heedless tread in a curious Garden.

PAssing through the small divisions of a curious knot, which was richly adorned with rare Tulips, and other beautiful flowers, I was very careful to shun those flowers, which indeed had no other worth to commend them, but their exquisite colours, and unadvisedly trod upon and spoiled an excellent choice herb, which though it grew obscurely, yet had rare Physical vertues in it.

When I was made sensible of the involuntary trespas I had committed, I thought I could scarcely make the Owner a better compensation, than by telling him, that herein (though against my will) I did but tread in the footsteps of the greatest part of the world, who are very careful (as I was) to keep their due distance from splendid, though worthless Gallants; mean while trampling upon, and crushing under

underfoot, the obſcure, but moſt precious ſervants of God in the world. As little do they heed theſe moſt excellent perſons, as I did this precious herb.

Summa ingenia in occulto ſæpe latent, ſaith *Plautus*,
Rare wits and herbs ſometimes do ſculk and ſhrink
In ſuch blind holes, as one would little think.

For my own part, I deſire to tread upon no man with the foot of contempt and pride, much leſs upon any good man; and that I may not, It concerns me to look before I ſtep; I mean, to conſider, before I cenſure: Had I done ſo by this rare herb, I had never hurt it.

MEDIT. IV.

Upon a withered Poſey taken up in the way.

FInding in my walk a Poſey, of once ſweet and fragrant, but now dry and withered flowers, which I ſuppoſed to be thrown away by one that had formerly worn it: Thus ſaid I, doth the unfaithful world uſe its friends, when providence hath blaſted and withered them; whilſt they are rich and honourable, they will put them into their boſoms, as the owners of this Poſey did, whilſt it was freſh and fragrant; and as eaſily throw them away, as uſeleſs and worthleſs things, when thus they come to be withered. Such uſage as this *Petronius* long ſince complained of.

Cum fortuna manet vultum ſervatis amici,
Cum cecidit turpi vertitis ora fuga. (i. e.)
Are they in honour? then we ſmile like friends,
And with their fortunes all our friendſhip ends.

But this looſe and deceitful friendſhip ſtinks ſo odiouſly in the very noſtrils of nature, that a *Heathen Poet* ſeverely taxes, and condemns it as moſt unworthy of a man.

Turpe sequi casum, & fortunæ cedere, amicum
Et nisi sit fœlix esse negare suum, (i. e.)
'Tis base to change with fortune, and deny
A faithful friend, because in poverty.

And is this indeed the friendship of the world? Doth it thus use them whom once it honoured? Then Lord! let me never seek its friendship. O let me esteem the smiles and honours of men less, and thy love and favour more. Thy love is indeed unchangeable, being pure, free, and built upon nothing that is mutable; thou never servest thy friends as the world doth its darlings.

MEDIT. V.

Upon the sudden withering of a Rose.

BEing with my friend in a Garden, we gathered each of us a Rose; he handled his tenderly, smel'd to it but seldom and sparingly, I always kept it to my nose, or squeezed it in my hand, whereby in a very short time, it lost both colour and sweetness, but his still remained as sweet and fragrant as if it had been growing upon its own root. These Roses said I, are the true emblems of the best and sweetest creature-enjoyments in the world; which being moderately and cautiously used and enjoyed, may for a long time yield sweetness to the Possessor of them; but if once the affections seize too greedily upon them, and squeeze them too hard, they quickly wither in our hands, and we lose the comfort of them; and that either through the souls surfeiting upon them, or the Lord's righteous and just removal of them, because of the excess of our affections to them; earthly comforts, like pictures, shew best at a due distance. It was therefore a good saying of *Homer*, ἀνδρὶ ξεινοδάκω, &c.

Mihi

Mihi nunquam is placet hoſpes
Qui valde præterque modum odit vel amat.
I like him not who at the rate
Of all his might doth love or hate.

'Tis a point of excellent wiſdom to keep the golden bridle of moderation, upon all the affections we exerciſe upon earthly things, and never to ſlip thoſe reins, unleſs when they move towards God, in whoſe love there is no danger of exceſs.

MEDIT. VI.

Upon the ſudden withering of beautiful flowers.

HOw freſh and orient did theſe Flowers lately appear, when being daſh'd over with the morning dew, they ſtood in all their pride and glory, breathing out their delicious odours, which perfumed the air round about them, but now are daver'd and ſhrivelled up, and have neither any deſirable beauty, or ſavor in them.

So vain a thing is the admired beauty of creatures, which ſo captivates the hearts, and exerciſes a pleaſing tyranny over the affections of vain man, yet is as ſuddenly blaſted as the beauty of a flower.

Forma bonum fragile eſt quantumque accedit ad annos,
Fit minor & ſpacio carpitur ipſa ſuo.
Nec ſemper violæ, nec ſemper lilia florent
Et riget amiſſa ſpina relicta roſa.
Tempus erit quo vos ſpeculum vidiſſe pigebit,
Jam veniunt rugæ quæ tibi corpus arent, &c.
How frail is beauty? In how ſhort a time
It fades! Like Roſes which have paſt their prime.

So

So wrinckled age the faireſt face will plow,
And caſt deep furrows on the ſmootheſt brow:
Then where's that lovely tempting face? alas!
Your ſelves would bluſh to view it in a glaſs,

If then thou delighteſt in beauty (O my ſoul!) chuſe that which is laſting. There is a beauty which never fades, even the beauty of holineſs upon the inner man; this abides freſh and orient for ever, and ſparkles gloriouſly when thy face (the ſeat of natural beauty) is become an abhorrent and lothſom ſpectacle. Holineſs enammels and ſprinkles over the face of the ſoul with a beauty upon which Chriſt himſelf is enamour'd, even imperfect holineſs on earth is a Roſe that breaths ſweetly in the bud; in heaven it will be full blown, and abide in its prime to all eternity.

MEDIT. VII.

Upon the tenderneſs of ſome choice Flowers.

HOw much care is neceſſary to preſerve the life of ſome Flowers? They muſt be boxed up in the Winter, others muſt be covered with glaſſes in their ſpringing up, the fineſt and richeſt mould muſt be ſifted about the roots, and aſſiduouſly watered, and all this little enough, and ſometimes too little to preſerve them, whilſt other common and worthleſs flowers grow without any help of ours; yea, we have no leſs to do, to rid our gardens of them, than we have to make the former grow there.

Thus ſtands the caſe with our hearts, in reference to the motions of grace and ſin. Holy thoughts of God muſt be aſſiduouſly watered by prayer, and earthed up by Meditation, and defended by watchfulneſs, and yet all this ſometimes too little to preſerve them alive in our ſouls. Alas! the heart is a ſoyl that agrees not with them, they are tender things, and

and a small matter will nip and kill them. To this purpose is the complaint of the divine Poet.

Who would have thought a joy
so coy?
To be offended so,
and go
So suddenly away.
Hereafter I had need
take heed.
Joyes among other things
have wings,
And watch their opportunities of flight,
Converting in a moment day to night.

Herbert.

But vain thoughts, and unholy suggestions, these spread themselves, and root deep in the heart, they naturally agree with the soyl; so that it is almost impossible at any time to be rid of them. 'Tis hard to forget what is our sin to remember.

MEDIT. VIII.

Upon the strange means of preserving the life of Vegetables.

I Observe that plants and herbs are sometimes killed by frosts, and yet without frosts they would neither live nor thrive; they are sometimes drowned by water, and yet without water they cannot subsist; they are refreshed and cheered by the heat of the Sun, and yet that heat sometimes kills and scorches them up. Thus lives my Soul, troubles and afflictions seem to kill all its comforts; and yet without these, its comforts could not live. The Sun-blasts of prosperity sometimes refresh me, and yet those Sun-blasts are the likeliest way to wither me; by what seeming contradictions is

is the life of my Spirt preserved? what a mystery? what a Paradox is the life of a Christian.

Welcome my health, this sickness makes me well,
Med'cines adieu:
When with diseases, I have list to dwell,
I'le wish for you.
Welcome my strength, this weakness makes me able,
Powers adieu:
When I am weary grown of standing stable,
I'le wish for you.
Welcome my wealth, this loss hath gain'd me more,
Riches adieu:
When I again grow greedy to be poor,
I'le wish for you.
Welcome my credit, this disgrace is glory:
Honours adieu:
When for renown and fame I shall be sorry:
I'le wish for you,
Welcome content, this sorrow is my joy.
Pleasures adieu,
When I desire such grief as may annoy:
I'le wish for you.
Health, strength, and riches, credit, and content
Are spared best sometimes, when they are spent,
Sickness, and weakness, loss, disgrace, and sorrow
Lend most sometimes, when most they seem to borrow.

And if by these contrary and improbable wayes, the Lord preserves our souls in life, no marvel then we find such strange and seemingly contradictory motions of our hearts, under the various dealings of God with us, and are still restless in what condition soever he puts us; which restless frame was excellently expressed in that pious Epigram of reverend *Gattaker*, made a little before his death.

I thirst for thirstiness, I weep for tears;
well pleas'd I am to be displeased thus:
The only thing I fear is want of fears:
suspecting I am not suspicious,
I cannot chuse but live, because I dye
And when I am not dead how glad am I?

Yet when I am thus glad for sense of pain
and careful am lest I should careless be
Then do I grieve for being glad again,
and fear lest carelesness take care for me.
Amidst those restless thoughts, this rest I find.
For those that rest not here, there's rest behind

Jam tetigi portum, valete.

FINIS.

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FINIS.